



Civil Service

*A Brilliant
Civil Service*

Career Frameworks

**A guide for Civil Service Professions on
building Professional Career Frameworks**



Introduction

Career pathways support delivery of the vision in the Civil Service Workforce Plan. They describe where an individual's career journey may move across more than one profession. They ensure individuals have information readily available to them to make career choices and plan multi-professional careers.

One of the key ways to deliver on this ambition is through professions developing of strong and relevant professional career frameworks for their own professions.

Professional career frameworks can inform cross-cutting career pathways. A degree of alignment between career frameworks across professions can facilitate opportunities for development of depth of expertise or breadth of experience in the Civil Service as well as build capability at a cross-government level.

"More than three-quarters (76%) of organisations worldwide report their Career Framework delivered a positive return on their investment."

Mercer
2015 Career Frameworks in Talent Management Survey



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Purpose of this guide

This guide is for cross-government Heads of Professions and their teams, to draw on to support them in developing their professional career frameworks.

The guide can help professions sense check alignment of their approach with the Civil Service objectives for professional career frameworks (career frameworks).

This enables career frameworks to be developed in a consistent way, to demonstrate scope for progression, and development for individuals in the Civil Service.

This guide relates solely to the development of professional career frameworks.

Guidance on the other expectations and governance for professions, is available on Civil Service Learning (CSL), in the Professions Best Practice Framework.

This framework illustrates the standards and best practice for professions, through six essential foundations of a profession:

- Governance
- Leadership
- Strategic workforce planning
- Standards
- Curriculum and qualifications
- Networks.

It also shows where building and implementing career frameworks might best support delivery of these essential areas.

What is a career framework?

Career frameworks developed within and for a profession, articulate, sometimes for the first time, in one place the skills, experience and capabilities needed for each role, in each grade, for that profession.

Career frameworks can form a key part of supporting individuals to grow and develop their career within a profession.

A profession provides a career anchor for individuals. Individuals may often have one main professional anchor although they may align to one or more profession.

A career anchor will be the starting point when individuals are planning their professional careers and when considering moves between professions.

Based on their main career anchor, individuals can access their profession's career framework to support this planning.





What are the aims of building and publishing career frameworks?

Career frameworks have benefits for individuals, professions and departments.

To deliver consistency across the Civil Service, three fundamental outcomes for career frameworks have been agreed to deliver on those benefits:

Career frameworks drive up professionalism by:

- raising professional standards by clearly articulating, in one place, those professional expectations
- establishing a common understanding of the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours that are critical for professional and individual success and
- highlighting external qualifications and external accreditation of internal courses as appropriate, building external recognition of Civil Service professional skills.

Career frameworks facilitate career development by:

- enabling an understanding of self-assessment against the expectations for each role
- clarifying the different routes an individual can take to enable them to develop depth of expertise or breadth of experience. This could be either in their current role, laterally, or on promotion, depending on their aspirations
- providing a tool for an individual to facilitate discussions with their line manager to identify and address any professional development needs and
- identifying the learning to support development in their current role or for a move into a different role.

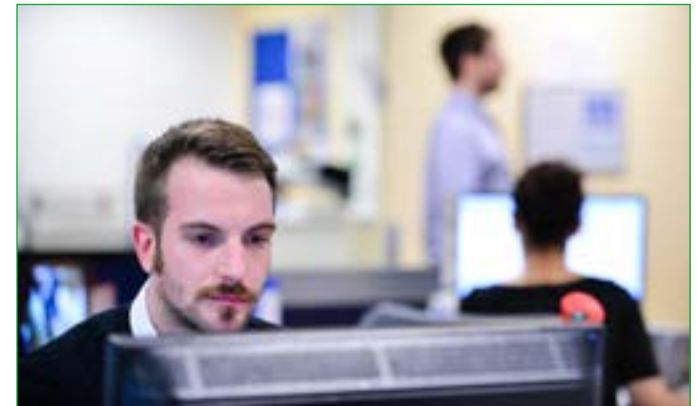
What are the aims of building and publishing career frameworks?

Career frameworks support selection by:

- supporting professional recruitment by integrating career frameworks with **Success Profiles**
- showcasing professional opportunities and development offer to attract talent and
- serving as a retention tool, by showing progression opportunities available and demonstrating how the Civil Service is committed to continued professional development.

Publishing career frameworks

The vision, is that to deliver on these benefits, that career frameworks are published to enable everyone able to access the professional career information they need at the right time and to see the full range of roles available in and across professions.

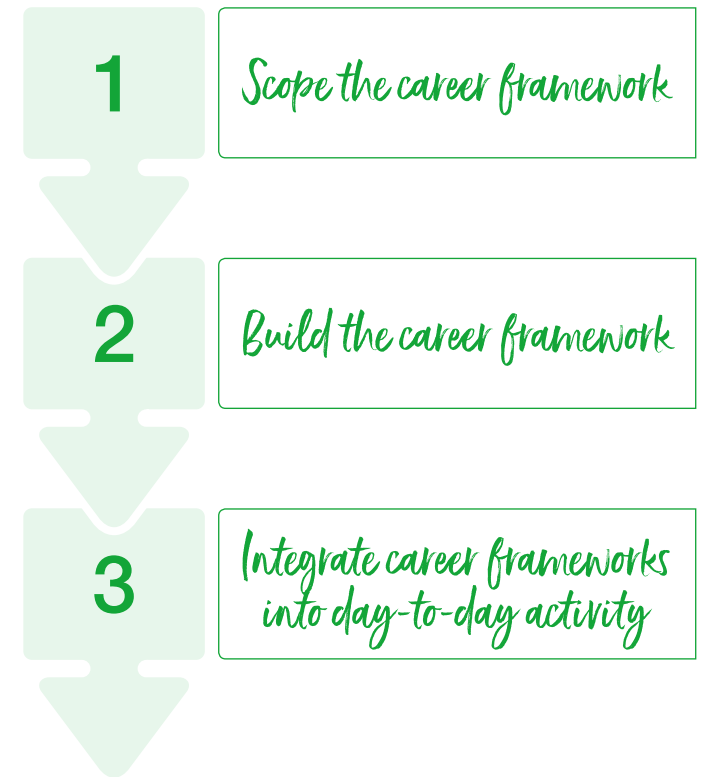


By making these opportunities visible, individuals will understand how to gain the skills and experience they need to develop in a structured way. This in turn can build professional capability and support our talent pipeline to expert or functional leadership roles.

What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

Professions are responsible for developing and designing career frameworks that suit their specific needs and that also contribute to the Civil Service professional offer.

Professions can decide how to approach this but there are a number of principles set out in this document that professions are expected to adopt to build a degree of commonality and consistency across career frameworks and the Civil Service.





What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

1: Scope the career framework

All professions are unique, and each profession's approach will depend on the maturity of the profession, its current employment model, and Heads of Professions' leadership priorities.

The profession's approach also needs to take account of the three agreed outcomes. Giving time to scoping provides the opportunity to map out what a career framework needs to deliver for your profession, underpinned by common principles to ensure a level of consistency across professions.

Early scoping will help you to plan the work and resource needed at each stage to deliver your career framework in a way that engages your community and ensures effective implementation.

Establish the current state of the profession's career offer and identify any key challenges

This stage involves gathering any information already available on the current career structure for the profession. This provides useful insight for development of the career framework. It

will help you focus on your strategic ambitions for the career framework in the context of the Civil Service expectations. This will give a clear direction and context for the build stage.

Early discussion with Human Resources (HR) colleagues is recommended to gain insight on any specific challenges for managing careers in your profession e.g. recruitment difficulties for a particular job family; the need to work on attraction strategies, or skills and experience gaps.

Develop a communications strategy

Involving key internal and external stakeholders early on will make sign off and implementation easier.

It is worth spending time to formulate a communications strategy. This helps to clarify how and when you will involve key stakeholders to get their views; ensure they are aware of the plan of work and provide an avenue to feed ideas into the design.

This work will ensure that the developed career framework is a profession-wide initiative. This will



What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

help ensure career frameworks have real impact as they are embedded across the profession with individuals fully sighted on their value and using them to support their career journey.

It will be worth understanding what other professions are doing or have done to communicate and engage individuals across departments and learn from their good practice.

Map your stakeholders

Having scoped your communications strategy, you will want to ensure it covers all interested and important stakeholders. At this early stage it will also be helpful to map out who you intend to engage.

A key part of this engagement needs to be with a cross-cutting and diverse stakeholder group from within your professional community, at a range of grades. Alongside your professional community this engagement may also include:

- Departmental Heads of Professions
- HR Directors/HR
- related professions

- capability leads
- departmental capability leads
- diversity and inclusion teams, and
- talent teams.

Cross-departmental engagement is critical to developing career frameworks. One approach, as part of your strategy, may be to set up a working group. The group should be representative of the diverse range of stakeholders impacted by development of the career framework.

Early consideration of the format and publishing of your career framework

Having thought about your communications strategy, you will also want to develop some early ideas of the format and the level of interactivity in the framework although this may change as you start to draft and test the product or engage on it. This is where looking at what other professions have done (Annex B) can help you shape what you might want your offer to look like to suit your profession.

What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

2: Build the career framework

Building on your communications strategy, a number of key components will form the basis of the design and build of your career framework.

As part of the development stage, professions building career frameworks will want to:

- engage with other closely related professions that have developed their professional career frameworks to understand their approach and good practice
- access the support network available via Learning Expert Partners and the functional network as appropriate (see [Annex A](#)).



When thinking about the structure of your career framework, it is expected your career framework will reflect the agreed cross-professional principles for all career frameworks, that they will:

- use the **naming convention “professional career frameworks”** in products, websites or any narrative. This can be as the main name or in brackets alongside the profession’s own naming
- have a **structure that is based on job families**
- **describe roles by grade or by the use of an indicative grade** or range of grades alongside any other description e.g. level
- express directly or clearly signpost individuals, at each grade, to the **offer from management fundamentals**
- express directly or clearly **signpost individuals to the SCS learning offer** from the Leadership Academy
- express directly or clearly **signpost individuals to the Fast stream and Apprenticeships curricula**



What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

- clearly signpost throughout the document or in initial narrative **the entry and exit points to other related professions** throughout the career journey
- clearly signpost clearly throughout the document or in initial narrative where individuals **can enter the profession with no professional requirements**
- provide coverage, within the career framework, **up to and including Director level** and
- use **language aligned to Success Profiles** to describe the technical requirements for roles.

More detail to support the use of these principles to underpin the development and structure of your career framework is set out in this guide.

Career frameworks structure is based on job families

A job family is defined as a series or grouping of jobs, rather than individual roles, with similar characteristics, knowledge, skills, and abilities (behaviours) and showing professional levels, providing for professional opportunities over time.

Job families are distinct groups that share the nature of their work and have a common purpose or function.

Career frameworks are expected to be job family based, and this will need to be reflected in the structure of your career framework. This will involve establishing how job families, possibly initially scoped as part of the strategic discussions on the career framework, are representative of the profession as it is. It is also important at this stage of development to, as far as possible, think about how your career framework reflects your future workforce needs.



What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

Professional job families should be defined by the:

- nature or common function of the work e.g. customer relations, production, and sales management
- technical or professional discipline or skills e.g. scientists, engineers, accountants and actuaries.

The career framework should make clear the career routes within and across job families. These are normally shown visually to demonstrate the number of opportunities available. **The emphasis should not only be on career progression but also on lateral moves, highlighting the opportunities to build breadth and depth of expertise.**

Think about how to structure your career framework so it supports career conversations by being clear and accessible - this will be particularly helpful where managers are in a different profession.

Career Frameworks will describe roles up to Director level by grade

For each level of role in a job family, this should be shown by grade. This can be a substantive grade. Alternatively an indicative grade or range of grades can be given against the descriptors a profession uses, e.g. working or practitioner level. This enables individuals to have a basis for comparison and a sense of the level they are working towards across professions.

Career frameworks should cover up to and including Director level. This will support individuals who are developing their careers across professions, to map out their paths including where their aspirations are to the most senior roles.

What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

Career Frameworks will signpost individuals to specific learning

Having defined what is needed for a given role, you will want to establish clear links in the career framework to appropriate professional and management and/or leadership learning opportunities.

Career frameworks should clearly signpost individuals, to any Civil Service professional learning offer required for a role and this will highlight the opportunities and range of learning open to individuals. Career frameworks should also reference or make links to the Management Fundamentals resource at each grade.

Management Fundamentals highlight the learning focussed on managing self, managing people, relationships, and delivering results.

There is also an expectation that the SCS leadership learning offer will be made visible in, or linked to, career frameworks. This will ensure a focus on developing key management and/or leadership skills alongside professional capability.



As part of a clear talent and career offer career frameworks will also make visible, either within the framework or as a link to other documents, the curricula for fast streamers and apprentices.



What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

Career frameworks will clearly signpost entry and exit points

Individuals may have more than one professional anchor or want to develop across more than one profession and should be able to gain an understanding of the potential for them to move between professions (particularly those that are most closely related) from career frameworks.

Also some roles may sit within more than one profession and it is important to connect with those professions to establish commonalities and interaction points so individuals in those roles are clear about their career options.

In addition some roles for example business partner roles sit within the Human Resources, Finance, and Communication professions, may have transferable skills and it may be helpful to be clear what those transferable skills may be.

This links to ensuring that your career framework shows roles that do not have a profession specific entry requirement. Where this is the case you should make this very clear in your career framework so you are showing where individuals from other professions might be able to transition into your profession. This will both open up opportunities for individuals and widen your talent pool.



What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

Qualifications

As part of establishing the job related professional experience and skills needed, it is important to establish and link the career framework to any appropriate external professional qualification framework, where they exist.

It will be important for recruitment that it is clear where these qualifications are a requirement for a given role. You will want to sense-check that you are not asking for qualifications that are not necessary and that may prevent movement into the profession.

This clarity on the professional requirements for qualifications will also help to make visible and drive up standards of professionalism. It will also mean civil servants can compare and build their skills comparable to those in the external market.

Career Frameworks will use language aligned to Success Profiles

Aligning career frameworks and Success Profiles offers an opportunity for professions to influence and drive consistency in professional recruitment.

Your career framework will need to be structured in a way that highlights professional requirements of the role through aligning to Success Profiles.

As career frameworks serve a wider role than as a tool for recruitment it will be important that the narrative in the frameworks makes clear what information might be useful for recruitment or for development planning.

Reflecting the language of Success Profiles within career frameworks, i.e. technical, experience, behaviours, strengths, and ability will enable departmental vacancy holders to draw on career frameworks to more easily understand key Success Profile requirements for roles.

Asking a closely related profession to sense-check your professional requirements to assess if they are an essential professional requirement or whether there are other ways individuals can provide evidence to allow them to join the profession.



What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

3: Integrate career frameworks into day-to-day activity

Ensuring continued use and relevance of your career framework

To ensure frameworks are used regularly as a key part of professionalising the Civil Service, you will want to have regular conversations with your departmental Heads of Profession and departmental HR teams. This will help you understand how effectively career frameworks support delivery of the professional agenda in departments, integrated into current and emerging strategic HR priorities. Also, these conversations are an opportunity to assess how well career frameworks support the employee experience and are contributing to all individuals reaching their potential.

Other areas of HR practice where frameworks can add value and where you will want to understand how career frameworks are used in departments can include:

Induction

You will want to consider both as a profession, and in discussion with departmental profession and HR leads, how induction programmes and processes can promote career frameworks, and their use as a tool to support individuals. This early awareness of career frameworks can provide an individual with a means to begin their professional engagement and also help with managing their professional career development in the Civil Service.

Talent strategies

Reflecting talent schemes, aligned to your professional career frameworks and development opportunities can support attraction and retention, and help strengthen talent pipelines.

Career frameworks can also be used to support talent and development conversations.

What areas do you need to consider when developing career frameworks?

Performance Management

The current Performance Management (PM) Framework requires departments to reflect eight core elements in their PM approach.

These core elements are designed to help the Civil Service achieve effective performance management (at delegated grades).

One of these core elements requires departments to develop their PM approaches in partnership with the relevant professions. This allows professional standards to be integrated into departmental PM approaches to ensure that:

- comparable professional standards are being applied across organisations; and that
- assessments of individuals translate between departments when moving within a profession.

The development and availability of career frameworks clearly articulating professional standards can support conversations on delivering this core element, between departmental HR teams, Performance Management leads and Heads of Profession.

Longer-term integration

Longer term you may want to consider to reflect on how aligning your career framework can support the delivery of other strategic HR priorities, such as strategic workforce planning, and areas of emerging practice.



Annex A: Who can help?

It will be valuable to tap into the range of expertise readily available within the wider professional and HR community to help build and implement career frameworks.

Working in this way will ensure the profession builds on what is already working elsewhere and help create career frameworks that can be related to and feel accessible.

Professional Communities

Other professions can be the best source of support, to help build and implement career frameworks.

Encouraging an approach of joint professional working at all levels will build on any existing good practice across professions.

Functional HR Business Partners/HR leads

Core Civil Service functions have Functional HR Business Partners who partner leaders across their function and shape and deliver the

people strategy underpinning their function. If your profession aligns to a function, you should draw on this expertise when building your framework. See Annex C for a list of functions and professions.

Functional HRBPs and profession's HR Leads can support the development of career frameworks by:

- ensuring strong engagement across the profession, as you build your framework, to promote understanding and take-up once published
- advising and shaping the structure of career frameworks to deliver on profession specific and Civil Service priorities
- providing guidance on links to appropriate learning and development
- helping to ensure alignment between career frameworks and Success Profiles
- working with Functional HRBPs in other professions to share learning on what has worked well

Annex A: Who can help?

- working across professions to ensure career frameworks explain the transition points/step between professions
- helping to encourage read across to other professional frameworks (particularly for those most closely related professions) to promote a degree of consistency and commonality across career frameworks.
- facilitating cross-profession learning around common skills needs e.g. leadership and management skills for senior management
- facilitating the sharing of best practice between professions e.g. fostering communities of best practice
- providing practical guidance around learning e.g. setting out consistent definitions

Learning Expert Partners

Learning Expert Partners (LEPs) work with professions as consultants. They bring a wealth of learning experience to provide tailored support to professions.

For professions seeking to grow, LEPs can support with the development of career frameworks by:

- providing expert advice, the nature of which depends on the specific opportunities, priorities and issues for a given profession e.g. to help professions develop their capability plans for current and future workforce development
- consulting with professions on central strategic projects and change
- accessing other expertise around organisational design and development, leadership and learning.

Annex B: Are there any examples out there?

A number of professions have already published their professional career frameworks and two examples are highlighted here. These and other examples can provide useful insight when developing your approach.

Digital, Data and Technology Profession (DDaT)

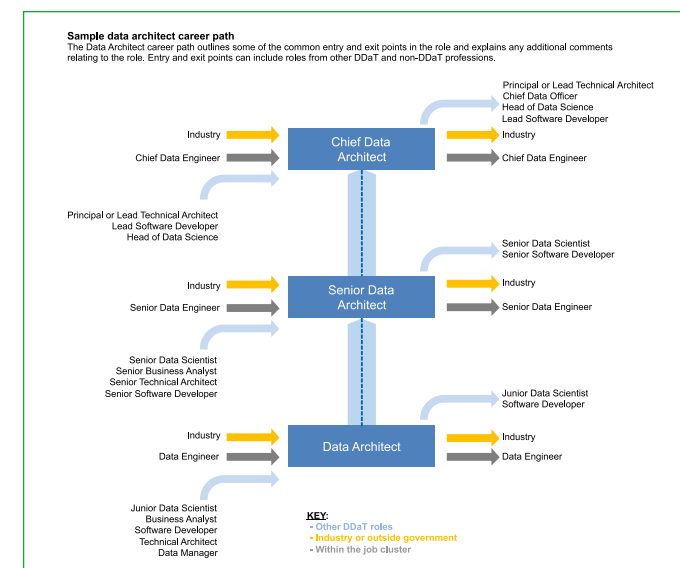
The DDaT Profession Capability Framework is available on the on the Civil Service Learning site (CSL). The framework describes the roles in the profession and provides details of the level of skills and civil service behaviours expected.

The Capability Framework is designed to work alongside existing performance management processes, providing additional information about specialist skills needed for DDaT roles.

It provides a common set of roles, skills and career paths that all government organisations can use. It is not intended to be a detailed description of the responsibilities of every DDaT professional.

The career framework aims to help anyone to:

- learn about what different roles do in government
- understand what skills are needed by professionals in particular jobs
- identify skills that need development to help career progression
- assess skills in preparation for performance reviews
- create effective job adverts.



Annex B

Are there any examples out there?

Government Project Delivery Profession

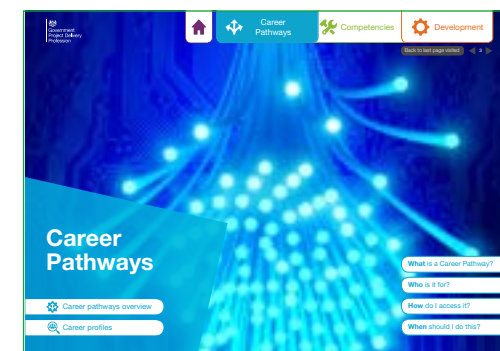
The Project Delivery Capability Framework (PDCF) has been produced to support the capability development of all Project Delivery professionals in government and is one of the first career frameworks to be available externally.

It contains three main elements:

- Career pathways that set out the job roles within the profession
- Technical and behavioural competencies aligned to these roles
- A development section that enables people to identify the right development for them.

The PDCF is an interactive document explaining all aspects of the career framework. It enables project delivery professionals, and those interested in becoming project delivery professionals, to explore the different roles within the profession.

The PDCF was developed by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, as the home of the Project Delivery Profession, and project delivery representatives from all the main government departments.





 HM Government

 Project Delivery

 Profession





Career

 Pathways



Competencies



Development

[Career pathway overview](#)

[Career profiles](#)

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Project Delivery Career Pathways

Click on job role for an overview.

Click on  for a grade-specific description.

		Civil Service grades								
		B1	B2	A		SCS				
		EO	HEO	SEO	G7	G6	SCS 1	SCS 2	SCS 3	
Project Delivery Career Pathways	Leadership									
										
		Head of Profession								
		SEO / Sponsor								
		Portfolio Manager / Director								
	Project Delivery Specialists									
										
		Programme Manager / Director								
		Project Manager / Director								
		PMO Manager / Director								
		Portfolio Analyst								
		Project Planner								
		Resource Manager								
		Business Case Manager								
		Assurance Manager								
		Configuration Manager								
		Project Support Officer								
		Securities & Reporting Manager								
		Risks & Issues Manager								
		Advisor								
	Business Analysis & Change Specialist									
										
		Stakeholder Manager								
		Benefits Manager								
		Business Change Manager								
		Business Analyst								

Links with other Professions

The roles in the Project Delivery Career Pathways are the core roles for the Project Delivery Profession. In addition, there are many other roles that are needed to successfully deliver projects. These roles are not included in our framework but you will find information on them within the frameworks of other professions, such as: [Capital, Data & Technology \(CDAT\)](#), [Commercial](#), [Finance](#), [Policy and Legal](#).

Project Delivery Capability Framework November 2018 (Version 2)

Annex C: Civil Service professions and functions

Professions

A profession is a group of individuals with common professional skills, experience and expertise. In many cases the Civil Service profession may be linked to a professional body that regulates membership.

Corporate Finance Profession	Government Security Profession
Counter-fraud Standards and Profession	Government Science and Engineering Profession
Digital, Data and Technology Professions	Government Social Research Profession
Government Communication Service	Government Statistical Service Profession
Government Economic Service	Government Tax Profession
Government Finance Profession	Government Veterinary Profession
Government IT Profession	Human Resources Profession
Government Knowledge and Information Management Profession	Intelligence Analysis
Government Legal Profession	Internal Audit Profession
Government Occupational Psychology Profession	Medical Profession
Government Operational Research Service	Operational Delivery Profession
Government Planning Inspectors	Policy Profession
Government Planning Profession	Procurement Profession
Government Property Profession	Project Delivery Profession

Annex C: Civil Service professions and functions

Functions

A function delivers a defined and cross-cutting set of services to a department – and the Civil Service as a whole – through a collection of roles. Strong central leadership within a function sets the standard for quality of delivery in departments (and in the central function where delivery elements have been centralised).

Commercial	Digital
Communications	Property
Finance	Legal
Human Resources	Project Delivery
Internal Audit	Analysis
Corporate Finance	Fraud, Error, Debt and Grants