

Key features of the Vaccines Task Force

This is a personal view on what I see as the key features that led to success of the Vaccines Task Force.

1. **Content experts were brought in rapidly** from outside government for specific purpose
 - they were experts in manufacturing of vaccines, R&D and people with good contacts and credibility across industry
 - This was hosted in an existing department so IT, HR contracts etc could be sorted speedily once authority was given to get on with it; recruitment and onboarding happened at a much accelerated rate
2. An **at-risk investment mindset was taken** with a clear understanding that the outcome was uncertain, and that it was possible that none of the projects would work
 - required HMT and SROs to take a different approach to VfM and risk
3. **Procurement was part of the process** from the beginning
 - R&D investments and risk were linked to procurement and to manufacturing
 - Procurement from SMEs was specifically targeted, and the security of having a procurement plan meant businesses engaged
4. There was a **very clear and measurable outcome objective**
5. There was **single point accountability** for the whole activity and that person was **empowered and answerable to the PM**
 - very senior sponsorship secured buy-in and support from other ministers
 - that person had authority for rapid decision making with very few committees
6. **Private sector engagement was key** attracted with a suite of offerings from regulatory engagement, to infrastructure offers (clinical trials, manufacturing), to risk sharing
7. **Long term legacy was built into the thinking** from the beginning
 - longer term strategic investments could be made as part of the process
 - companies felt some stronger sense of stability and certainty

Clearly some of these features were specific to the task in hand, but others may be more generally applicable. Some of them are features identified in the “how to run a mission” paper that CST prepared in October 2018. Together this short note and the missions paper may be useful when considering similar projects and civil service reform more generally.

Patrick Vallance
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