



Finance Committee

FIN(4) 12-12 – Paper 2

COMMISSION ON DEVOLUTION IN WALES

Background

1. The Commission on Devolution in Wales was announced on 11 October 2011 by the Secretary of State for Wales, following a commitment in the Coalition Agreement to “establish a process similar to the Calman Commission for the Welsh Assembly”.

Terms of Reference

2. The Commission’s work has been divided into two parts and the Commission is currently considering the first part of its remit.
3. Part I: financial accountability
To review the case for the devolution of fiscal powers to the National Assembly for Wales and to recommend a package of powers that would improve the financial accountability of the Assembly, which are consistent with the United Kingdom’s fiscal objectives and are likely to have a wide degree of support.
4. Part II: powers of the National Assembly for Wales
To review the powers of the National Assembly for Wales in light of experience and to recommend modifications to the present constitutional arrangements that would enable the United Kingdom Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales to better serve the people of Wales.

Membership

5. The Commission has seven members, four of whom were each nominated by one of the main political parties in Wales. The other three members, including the Chairman, were appointed as independent members. The members of the Commission are:
 - Paul Silk (Chairman) – former Clerk to the National Assembly for Wales and former Clerk in the House of Commons.
 - Dyfrig John – Chair of the Principality Building Society.
 - Noel Lloyd – former Vice-Chancellor of Aberystwyth University.
 - Dr Eurfyl ap Gwilym (nominated by Plaid Cymru) – economist and economic advisor to Plaid Cymru
 - Rob Humphreys (nominated by the Welsh Liberal Democrats) – Director of the Open University in Wales.
 - Sue Essex (nominated by the Welsh Labour Party) – former member of the National Assembly for Wales and Finance Minister in the Welsh Government.



- Nick Bourne (nominated by the Welsh Conservatives) – former member of the National Assembly for Wales and leader of the Welsh Conservative Party.

Work of the Commission

6. The Commission launched its Call for Evidence on 25 November; it was issued in hard copy to over 450 stakeholders and was published on the Commission's website (commissionondevolutioninwales.independent.gov.uk). The Commission received 46 written submissions from a range of stakeholder groups including political parties, business organisations, interest groups, academics and members of the public during this period and has received a further 31 submissions since its call for evidence closed. The Commission also wrote specifically to organisations based in England near the border with Wales to gather their views.
7. The Commission held public events in every local authority area in Wales between March and May and has received a considerable amount of responses to its questionnaire from interested individuals. The Commission has also commissioned opinion poll work to look at the public opinion around fiscal powers for the National Assembly, the results of which will be published shortly.
8. The Commission has met legislators and interest groups in both Scotland and Northern Ireland to discuss the implications of on-going developments in these regions on the Commission's work.
9. The Commission has now begun to discuss its emerging conclusions and consider its package of recommendations based on the evidence it has heard. The Commission will publish its final report in late autumn.
10. A communiqué has been published on the Commission's website following each of its formal meetings to inform the public of the Commission's work.