



Commission on Devolution in Wales
Comisiwn ar Ddatganoli yng Nghymru



Devolution in Wales: How can we improve it?





What is the Commission on Devolution in Wales?

- 2010 UK Coalition Agreement
- 2011 Commission was launched:

Part 1: Financial Accountability ‘Empowerment and Responsibility’

Part 2: *To review the powers of the National Assembly for Wales in the 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.*



Our draft vision for Part II

We believe that the people of Wales will be best served by:

- a clear, well-founded devolution settlement that allows coherent political decisions to be made in a democratic and accountable manner, and*
- political institutions that operate effectively and work together in the interests of the people they serve.*
- Devolution of power to Wales should benefit the whole of Wales and the whole of the United Kingdom.*



What is devolved to Wales?

- Some policies already devolved – over 50 per cent of public spending in Wales
- NB “ Devolved” means mostly devolved, for example, even health not 100 per cent devolved
- Some not devolved, for example, defence
- And some policies are a mixture of both such as economic policies, energy and transport
- The devolution settlements in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are all different. Fewer powers are devolved in Wales.



Health and social care
Education
Local Government
Culture and sport
Environment
Agriculture

Economy
Transport
Energy

Defence
Foreign affairs
Police
Criminal Justice
Immigration
Broadcasting





What does evidence so far say?

- Some people prefer no change, some want to abolish National Assembly, some want independence
- Many want more powers in areas such as policing, justice, rail, ports, natural resources and energy, broadcasting and other areas
- Following slides give flavour of debate, not comprehensive.



Policing and Criminal Justice

”The current arrangements [for policing] work well. There are four key points to bear in mind ...

- Policing is inextricable linked with the criminal justice system;
- Existing arrangements provide a significant level of integration and autonomy;
- There are cost and complexity issues with separating out national structures ;
- The Strategic Policing Requirement and the management of national threats.”

“Policing and Justice should in principle be matters of devolved competence. Criminal justice should be devolved in longer time... Devolution to the Assembly of responsibility for policing in Wales can and should be undertaken, however.”



Broadcasting including regulation, BBC and S4C

“Responsibility is centralised at Westminster. This has created a democratic deficit between the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh media. We believe that this deficit can best be remedied by the **full devolution of broadcasting to the National Assembly for Wales.**”

“In a rapidly evolving digital environment **we do not believe that it would be sensible now to attempt to devolve responsibility for broadcasting** or certain elements of broadcasting.”



Energy including regulation and renewable energy

“Changing the threshold from 50MW to 100MW could have a negative impact on energy and planning policy for major infrastructure and result in increased complexity in the planning system and less efficient, more piecemeal and more expensive development.

“Disadvantages of [the current division of responsibilities] include: uncertainty over policy direction and inconsistency of process for developers, a temptation to indulge in a cross-border blame-game, and the potential for UK and Welsh Government policy aspirations to be at odds.”



Structure of devolution settlement

- Many want to change structure of Welsh devolution settlement
- Presently UK Parliament confers powers on National Assembly. Powers that are not conferred ARE NOT devolved
- In Scotland and Northern Ireland, UK Parliament reserves powers to itself. Powers that are not reserved ARE devolved
- Are Scottish and NI settlements simpler and clearer?



Other ways of improving devolution

“Commission should consider how devolved competencies in Wales can be best communicated to the people of Wales to enhance grassroots understanding of devolution and where key decisions which affect people's day-to-day lives are made.”

“The lack of a devolution dividend over 13 years suggests that the political class in Wales needs to focus on using the extensive powers it already has to focus most specifically on the economy, health and education.”

“ Commission would need to examine how to improve the capacity of the Welsh government and the civil service to implement new policy changes and of the National Assembly for Wales to scrutinise legislation and financial policy.”



| Over to you....