



ROSE BRIEFING 45 3 January 2022

Gove's 'Levelling Up' White Paper

The *Times* newspaper, 3 January 2022, carried a briefing on the likely contents of the 100 page White Paper promised for early this year on the government's Levelling Up programme. The target is that every region in England would have a local leader with powers equivalent to the London mayor within eight years. In county areas where the term mayor might be inappropriate there would be a 'governor'. The minimum population will be 500,000. There is also likely to be a Central Government oversight body, similar to the Office for Budget Responsibility, with powers to monitor all government actions with reference to their impact on regional inequalities. The Levelling Up fund remains at £4.8 billion.

Welsh Labour administration pushes for constitutional reform and more powers for the Welsh parliament

Welsh Labour's election programme April 2021

'Promote and support the work of the UK-wide Constitutional Commission being established by the UK Labour Party. We will work across the four nations, with the UK Labour Party and other UK parties and with the House of Lords **to press the UK Government for a more thoroughgoing federal reform** of our constitution and inter-governmental relations.'

Independent Commission: Welsh Government website 16 November 2021

The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales

'The commission will develop options for the fundamental reform of the constitutional structures of the UK in which Wales remains an integral part and it will also consider all progressive options to strengthen Welsh democracy.'

Professor Laura McAllister and Dr Rowan Williams confirmed as the co-chairs of the commission.

Hansard 17 November 2021

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Welsh Government about the independent commission set up by that Government to look at options for the future constitution of Wales.

Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist [for UK government]

My Lords, the UK Government have not yet had any discussions with the Welsh Government regarding the independent constitutional commission; nor were we informed of its proposed structural content. But we were aware that this was a manifesto commitment. In subsequent written communication with the Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, the First Minister of Wales stated that he would encourage the commission to contact the UK Government, and we hope to be able to give evidence.

Lord Foulkes My Lords, does the Minister agree that, while the constitution is a matter reserved to this Parliament, it is helpful that the Welsh Government have set up this independent commission to make recommendations? However, if the governance of Wales, the governance of Scotland and the governance of Northern Ireland are considered in isolation, there is an increased risk of the break-up of the United Kingdom. So will the UK Government now consider some form of review of the

governance of the whole of the United Kingdom, including England, in a systematic and coherent way, so that we can ensure the continued prosperity and unity of this United Kingdom?

Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist

As always, the noble Lord makes a very compelling case. The UK Government are committed to protecting and promoting the combined strengths of our union, building on hundreds of years of partnership and shared history. This Parliament remains in charge of the balance between reserved and devolved competences, and we will continue to make sure that our constitutional arrangements remain fit for purpose and enable our institutions to work effectively together to deliver for citizens in every part of the UK. We have no plans for a UK-wide constitutional convention.

Coalition agreement between Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru

Draft issued 21 November 2021; officially signed 1 December

Includes pledge

Constitutional Commission – Support the work of the Independent Commission on Wales’ Constitutional Future. Both parties are free to make submissions and interact with the commission independently. The commission’s interim and final reports will be presented jointly to both parties

European Union

Macron sets out his programme as EU President

Three objectives: better border protection and improved security; technological innovation; defending the rule of law.

Three principles: strengthening European security; developing a sound model of growth; creating a Europe closer to its citizens.

EU Central Bank December Report

Argues against raising interest rates: says November’s 4.9 percent inflation figure is short-term and will correct to 2 percent by end 2022; says will continue to ‘taper’ bond purchases (progressively cut supply of credit to wider banking system).