

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

17 January 2012

Minister for Political and Constitutional Reform:

Commission on the consequences of devolution for the House of Commons

Mark Harper

The Coalition Programme for Government includes a commitment to establish a Commission to consider the ‘West Lothian question’. In my statement of 8 September 2011 I gave some details of the forthcoming Commission and undertook to return to the House with further detail including the terms of reference for the Commission. This statement sets out the further detail.

The “*Commission on the consequences of devolution for the House of Commons*” will consist of a panel of six independent, non-partisan experts, chaired by Sir William McKay, a former Clerk of this House. The other five Commission members, whose backgrounds are in law, academia and constitutional development in the UK and the EU, are: Sir Stephen Laws, Sir Geoffrey Bowman, Professor Charlie Jeffery, Professor Yvonne Galligan and Sir Emyr Jones Parry.

As I stated previously, the Commission will focus on Parliamentary business and procedure. The Commission’s terms of reference are:

“To consider how the House of Commons might deal with legislation which affects only part of the United Kingdom, following the devolution of certain legislative powers to the Scottish Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the National Assembly for Wales.”

The Commission will commence in February 2012 and will make its recommendations to the Government in the course of the next Parliamentary session. This reporting timescale is necessary to ensure that the Commission has time for proper scrutiny of all relevant options.