

# Governance of Britain: One Year On

July 2008

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## Governance of Britain: one year on

This summary table sets out progress to date on the key commitments made in the Governance of Britain Green Paper (July 2007 Cm7170).

### Limiting the powers of the executive

The Government will seek to surrender or limit powers which it considers should not, in a modern democracy, be exercised exclusively by the executive.

Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<b>The power of the executive to deploy troops abroad</b> '...the Government will undertake further consultation on this issue before bringing forward more detailed proposals for Parliament to consider.' (p.19 paragraph 30)	<b>In progress:</b> The Government proposes that a detailed House of Commons resolution should set out the processes Parliament should follow in order to approve any commitment of Armed Forces into armed conflict. A draft House of Commons resolution was published in the Constitutional Renewal White Paper in March 2008	The White Paper is currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee.
<b>Ratifying Treaties</b> 'The Government believes that the procedure for allowing Parliament to scrutinise treaties should be formalised. The Government is of the view that Parliament may wish to hold a debate and vote on some treaties and, with a view to its doing so, will consult on an appropriate means to put the Ponsonby Rule on a statutory footing.' (p.19 paragraph 33)	<b>In progress:</b> A Government consultation was issued in October 2007. The draft Constitutional Renewal Bill published in March 2008 proposes putting the present arrangements for parliamentary scrutiny of treaties onto a statutory footing and that a vote against ratification of a particular treaty should have a legal effect.	The draft Bill is currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee.
<b>Dissolving Parliament</b> 'The Government believes that the convention should be changed so that the Prime Minister is required to seek the approval of the House of Commons before asking the Monarch for a dissolution. The Government will consult Parliament, interested bodies and the public. If it is agreed that changes should be made so that the Prime Minister is required to seek the approval of the House of Commons before asking the Monarch for a dissolution, the Prime Minister will announce the decision to Parliament and this will, through precedent, become a constitutional convention.' (p.20 paragraph 36)	<b>In progress:</b> The House of Commons Modernisation Committee is conducting an enquiry of dissolution and recall. The Government proposed to the House of Commons Modernisation Committee in March 2008 that where the Prime Minister proposes the dissolution of Parliament, he would have to put it to a vote of the House of Commons before formally asking the Monarch.	This proposal is subject to ongoing enquiry by Parliament.

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<p><b>Recalling Parliament</b></p> <p>‘The Government believes that where a majority of members of Parliament request a recall, the Speaker should consider the request, including in cases where the Government itself has not sought a recall. The Government will suggest to the House of Commons that the Standing Orders of the House be amended to allow this to happen and will consult with the House of Commons Modernisation Committee on precisely what amendment should be made.’</p> <p>(p.21 paragraph 39)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b></p> <p>The House of Commons Modernisation Committee is conducting an inquiry into dissolution and recall. The Government proposed to the House of Commons Modernisation Committee in March 2008 that the Standing Orders of the House be amended to provide for the Speaker to have the power to recall the House if s/he receives requests from over half of the membership of the House.</p>	<p>This proposal is subject to ongoing enquiry by Parliament.</p>
<p><b>Placing the Civil Service on a statutory footing</b></p> <p>‘The Government believes that, as part of the legislation it intends to bring forward in the next Session, it is right to include measures which will enshrine the core principles and values of the Civil Service in law.’</p> <p>(p.22 paragraph 43)</p> <p>‘The Government believes that it is inappropriate for even a limited number of special advisers to have such a role [to give orders to civil servants], and has revoked these provisions by an Order in Council. This will be made permanent in the forthcoming legislation.’</p> <p>(p.22 paragraph 47)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b></p> <p>The draft Constitutional Renewal Bill includes proposals to place the Civil Service on a statutory footing to reinforce its position as a permanent impartial service. These proposals build on a Government consultation exercise carried out in 2004.</p> <p><b>Completed:</b></p> <p>The provisions in Order in Council, which previously allowed up to three special advisers in No.10 to line-manage and give instructions to civil servants has been revoked.</p>	<p>The draft Bill is currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee.</p>

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Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<p>'The Government believes that in general the prerogative powers should be put onto a statutory basis and brought under stronger parliamentary scrutiny and control. The Government also intends to undertake a <b>wider review of the remaining prerogative executive powers</b> and will consider whether, in the longer term, all these powers should be codified or put on a statutory basis.'</p> <p>(p.18 paragraph 24)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b></p> <p>The Government has conducted an exercise across all departments to identify prerogative powers and now needs to consider the outcome of this review and consult publicly on the next steps.</p>	<p>We will consult on the outcome of the review of prerogative powers in the Autumn.</p>
<p><b>Passports</b></p> <p>'The Government will consult on whether individual prerogatives should be brought on to a statutory basis. Prerogatives to be examined will include the power to issue, refuse to issue, revoke or withdraw passports.'</p> <p>(p. 23 paragraph 50)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b></p> <p>The Government has decided in principle that it will introduce comprehensive legislation on the procedures for issuing passports and that draft legislation should be published for consultation before it is introduced to Parliament</p>	<p>Government will announce the timetable on this in due course.</p>
<p>'The Government is fully committed to enhancing public confidence and trust in the office of the <b>Attorney General</b> and is keen to encourage public debate on how best to ensure this and will listen to the views of all those with an interest. We will therefore publish a consultation document before the summer recess.'</p> <p>(p.24 paragraph 54)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b></p> <p>A consultation paper was published in July 2007. The draft Constitutional Renewal Bill and White Paper include a package of reforms to streamline, clarify and make more transparent the role of the Attorney General with a view to enhancing public confidence in the role and reinforcing the independence of the prosecuting authorities.</p> <p>Significant changes are proposed, particularly in relation to the Attorney General's role in relation to individual prosecutions and the prosecuting authorities. In particular, the Attorney General will cease to have any power to take decisions in individual cases, except in exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>The draft Bill is currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee.</p>

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Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<p><b>Appointments in the Church of England</b></p> <p>‘The Prime Minister should not have an active role in the selection of individual candidates, for diocesan bishoprics the Prime Minister proposes that from now on he should ask the Crown Nominations Commission to put only one name to him, a recommendation he would convey to The Queen. The Government will discuss with the church any necessary consequential changes to procedures for the appointments. The current convention for appointing Suffragan Bishops will continue.’</p> <p>(p.26 paragraph 63)</p> <p>‘The Government proposes to review other <b>non-executive appointments</b> in conjunction with the institutions affected with a view to removing any active role for Ministers, instead asking that the Government be given only one name, which pass to the Monarch.’</p> <p>(p.27 paragraph 68)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b></p> <p>The Synod has called for a continuing role for a senior civil servant to help in ensuring the wider needs of Church and Community continues to be given adequate weight in the appointment process. However, the Church agreed that the decisive voice in all future appointments would be that of the Church itself.</p> <p><b>Completed:</b></p> <p>The principle of the new approach has been agreed by all the major institutions consulted. It is being used in handling new appointments as they arise.</p>	<p>Following discussions with the Archbishops the Prime Minister has appointed a Director General in the Cabinet Office to be his Appointments Secretary for senior ecclesiastical appointments and his adviser within the senior Civil Service on Church/State relations.</p> <p>The Director General will work with the Archbishops' Appointments Secretary on the consultations for diocesan bishop appointments and will be a member of the Crown Nominations Commission. In relation to Crown appointments to cathedrals another senior civil servant will take part in the selection processes for the Crown deaneries.</p>
<p><b>Judicial Appointments</b></p> <p>‘The Government is willing to look at the future of its role in judicial appointments to consider going further than the present arrangement, including conceivably a role for Parliament itself, after consultation with the judiciary, Parliament and the public, if it is felt that there is a need.’</p> <p>(p.28 paragraph 71)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b></p> <p>The Government consultation was issued in October 2007. The draft Constitutional Renewal Bill includes a number of measures that will reduce the role of the Lord Chancellor and remove the role of the Prime Minister from the judicial appointments process and compensating measures to enable the Lord Chancellor to discharge his duty to maintain the justice system and to streamline the process. The White Paper also invites views on a number of other issues.</p>	<p>The draft Bill is currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny by a joint committee.</p>

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Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<b>Public Appointments</b> 'The Government believes that Parliament, through its select committees, should play a role in the appointment of key public officials and therefore proposes that the Government nominee for key positions should be subject to a pre-appointment hearing with the relevant select committee.' (p.29 paragraph 76)	<b>Completed:</b> The Constitutional Renewal White Paper reaffirms the Government's commitment to proceed with pre-appointment hearings with the relevant Parliamentary Select Committee but on a pilot basis. This takes account of views expressed by key stakeholders – such as the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government has agreed a list of 60 key public appointments with the Liaison Committee that will be subject to pre-appointment scrutiny.	There have, to date, been two pre-appointment hearings (for the Chair of the Statistics Authority and the Chair of the Care Quality Commission). In both cases the Select Committees have confirmed the Government's nominee. Over the next two years, there are likely to be another 10-20 hearings, including for key posts such as the Chair of Ofcom, the Information Commissioner and the Rail Regulator. During this period, the Government (as part of the pilot) will monitor and evaluate the impact of pre-appointment hearings on the number, balance and quality of applicants.
<b>NHS Appointments</b> 'There has been a separate process for NHS appointments since 2001 when the Appointments Commission was created, and this area will now be reviewed.' (p.30 paragraph 81)	<b>Completed:</b> In March 2007, the Department of Health directed the Appointments Commission to establish a review into the services it provides, to be led by its stakeholders. The review included in-depth interviews with some 50 key stakeholders, nearly 2,500 responses to an online survey, short-term working groups and views from candidates for appointments, including some who had not been successful. The review found that the commission's stakeholders felt that the commission added value through three unique functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It upholds public service values</li> <li>• It promotes independence in public appointments</li> <li>• It ensures good governance by supporting chairs and non-executives.</li> </ul>	The following actions, which came out of the review, are well advanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The transfer of responsibility for managing ongoing training and development to Strategic Health Authorities</li> <li>• The introduction of a more flexible appraisal system, giving greater local autonomy to develop systems that meet local needs</li> <li>• The development of a more flexible termination process, including the power to suspend</li> <li>• Enhanced induction training to provide better support to new appointees</li> <li>• Streamlined appointment processes and improved response times.</li> </ul>

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<b>Honours</b> 'In March 2006, the Prime Minister's predecessor made a statement in which he committed neither to add to nor subtract from the final list of names recommended to him by the Main Honours Committee. The Prime Minister restates this commitment and the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs and Defence will do likewise.' (p.30 paragraph 85)	<b>Completed</b>	

## Making the executive more accountable

The Government is committed to rebalancing power between Parliament and government, and giving Parliament greater ability to hold government to account.

Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<p>‘The Government proposes to consult on how the statutory basis of <b>the Intelligence and Security Committee</b> should be amended to bring the way in which it is appointed, operates and reports as far as possible into line with that of other select committees. Following consultation, the Government will then bring forward proposals to take the reforms further on a revised statutory basis.’</p> <p>(pp.32-33 paragraph 92)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b> The Constitutional Renewal White Paper includes the following proposals:</p> <p>To amend the procedure for making appointments to the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) to enable the full participation of Parliament, by adopting a process similar to that for joint select committee appointments, which sees nominations for membership put before Parliament with the House approved nominations being sent to the Prime Minister.</p> <p>Future debates on the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) reports should take place in the House of Lords, as well as the House of Commons, subject to time-tabling considerations.</p> <p>Debates on ISC reports in the House of Commons should follow the same practice of debates on select committee reports and be opened by the Chair of the Committee. Debates in the Lords should be opened by the senior Lords Committee member. The Government will work with the Committee to provide public briefings where this is possible without jeopardising national security.</p> <p>The Government will make the necessary resources available to the committee to allow the appointment of an investigator, or pool of individuals with expertise, to assist the committee in its work.</p> <p>The Government recognises that the arrangements for the committee’s accommodation need to balance the requirement for security with the need to emphasise the committee’s independence.</p>	<p>The Government proposes to seek parliamentary endorsement of these proposals through a resolution in both Houses.</p>

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<p>'The Government will publish a <b>National Security Strategy</b> setting out our approach to a range of security challenges and opportunities we face, now and in the future and both at home and overseas.</p> <p>'The Government will establish a <b>National Security Committee</b> to ensure that its policies and their delivery are co-ordinated and appropriate to the changing nature of risks and challenges facing us in the 21st century.'</p> <p>(p.33 paragraph 98)</p> <p>'The Government will consult over how <b>the strategy and its implementation can best be scrutinised</b>, as it affects the interests of a number of select committees and the Intelligence and Security Committee.'</p> <p>(p.34 paragraph 99)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b> A National Security Strategy was published for the first time on 19 March 2008.</p> <p><b>Completed.</b> A National Security and International Relations and Development Committee of Cabinet was established in late 2007 to oversee the development and delivery of the National Security Strategy, and to bring together all of the relevant parts of Government. The committee considers issues relating to defence and counterterrorism, and is charged with bringing together our overseas defence and security, as well as our development and community relations effort.</p> <p><b>In progress.</b> The Government will be consulting on arrangements for the Parliamentary scrutiny of the development and implementation of the strategy, which is of interest to a number of committees including the ISC.</p> <p>The Government is developing proposals for a National Security Forum including its role and membership.</p>	<p>From now on the Government will publish an annual update on the challenges outlined in the Strategy for Parliamentary debate and public scrutiny.</p>

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<p>'The Government welcomes the <b>Report of the House of Commons Modernisation Committee</b>, "Revitalising the Chamber: the role of the back bench Member".'</p> <p>(p.42 paragraph 139)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b></p> <p>The Government published a response to the Committee's report in October 2007 in a White Paper (Cm 7231); the House of Commons debated and agreed this response on 25 October 2007:</p> <p>'The House agreed a range of specific measures to improve topicality in the Chamber, including the devotion of part of Oral Question Time for each main department to "topical questions" (i.e. questions not requiring advance notice of the subject matter) and the holding of short debates in the main Chamber in most weeks on a topical issue; to removing certain restrictions on the ways in which speaking time limits for Members' speeches can be imposed and in which emergency debates can be granted; and to promote greater clarity in House proceedings through replacing the practice of holding major debates on a motion to "adjourn the House" by debates on a motion giving a proper indication of the subject matter.'</p>	<p>The changes, which were initially put in place on a trial basis for a year, have been generally welcomed inside and outside the House and there will be an opportunity for members to discuss further changes or improvements.</p>

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<p><b>Regional Committees</b></p> <p>‘The Government believes that Regional Ministers should be accountable to Parliament. Both they and the Government’s regional policy should be subject to formal and consistent parliamentary scrutiny. In common with the Communities and Local Government Select Committee the Government believes that one means of achieving this scrutiny could be the establishment of nine regional select committees.’</p> <p>(p.38 paragraph 119)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b></p> <p>The House of Commons Modernisation Committee is conducting an inquiry into regional accountability and is expected to agree a report shortly.</p>	<p>The Modernisation Committee has agreed to publish its report on Regional Accountability shortly.</p>

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<p><b>Draft Legislative Programme</b></p> <p>‘The Government believes that, while preparing its advice to The Queen on the contents of The Queen’s Speech, it should seek the views of Parliament and the public. The Prime Minister will, therefore, at an appropriate time in advance of The Queen’s Speech, inform Parliament of the Government’s proposed legislative programme for the forthcoming year.’</p> <p>(p.34 paragraph 101)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b> The Government published its second Draft Legislative Programme on 14 May 2008. The timing of this year’s programme, two months earlier than in 2007, reflects comments made last year and gives more of an opportunity for people to make their views known and inform Government thinking at an earlier stage. Following comments made last year, the Government has also broadened the programme to include key non-legislative actions that it is planning for the year ahead to put the programme in its broader context.</p> <p>There are a number of ways people can comment both on the draft legislative programme as a whole, and also on specific policy issues and individual bills, including sending comments by post or responding online at <a href="http://www.commonsgov.uk/draftprogramme">www.commonsgov.uk/draftprogramme</a>. Last year, Regional Ministers took part in events in their region to highlight the publication of the Draft Legislative Programme and will be doing so again this year, as will the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Consultation with Parliament is an important part of the consultation process. The approach this year builds on the helpful recommendations from the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons’ report, <a href="#">Scrutiny of the Draft Legislative Programme</a>. Each House has been offered a day to debate the Draft Legislative Programme, well in advance of the summer recess and the Leader of the House of Commons has invited the House of Commons Liaison Committee to take evidence on the draft legislative programme.</p>	<p>The consultation period ends on 6 August 2008 and responses will help inform the legislative programme for 2008-09 as set out in the Queen’s Speech towards the end of this year. As last year, the Government will also publish a summary of consultation responses in the autumn.</p>

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<b>Departmental Debates</b> 'The Government believes that the House of Commons should be guaranteed an opportunity to debate, on the floor of the House, the annual objectives and plans of the major Government Departments in order to strengthen further Parliament's scrutiny of the executive.' (p.35 paragraph 108)	<b>In progress:</b> Government is considering its response to the report from the House of Commons Modernisation Committee on this issue.	
<b>Fiscal Reporting</b> 'The Government will simplify its reporting to Parliament, ensuring that it reports in a more consistent fashion, in line with the fiscal rules, at all three stages in the process; on plans, estimates and actual expenditure outturns.' (p.36 paragraph 111)	<b>In progress:</b> The Government will consult with departments over summer 2008 on the detailed changes needed to achieve this substantial reform.	The consultation period with departments ends in September 2008. Responses will help to inform the consultation with external stakeholders during the autumn. Formal proposals will be submitted to Parliament early 2009.

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<p><b>Chair of Statistics Board</b></p> <p>‘The Statistics and Registration Service Bill, provides for creation of an independent Statistics Board with a non-executive Chair appointed by the Crown. Because of the importance of this appointment in ensuring public confidence in official statistics, the Government believes that appointments to the Chair of the Board should be subject to confirmation by Parliament.’</p> <p>(p.36 paragraph 113)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b> The Statistics and Registration Service Act received Royal Assent in July 2007 and created the independent UK Statistics Authority with the overall aim of increasing public trust in statistics. The authority, with a non-executive chair, appointed by the Crown, is responsible for safeguarding and promoting the quality of UK official statistics. It takes the place of ministers in the governance of the Office for National Statistics and oversees the official statistics system as a whole. The authority took up its formal responsibilities on 1 April 2008.</p> <p>Following an independently-assessed recruitment process, the Government nominated Sir Michael Scholar KCB to be the first Chair of the Statistics Board. In July 2007 Sir Michael gave evidence before the Treasury Committee of the House of Commons. His nomination was subsequently endorsed by the House and his appointment made by Her Majesty. He assumed his responsibilities formally on 1 April 2008.</p>	
<p><b>Independence of Government statistics</b></p> <p>‘The Government has laid the Statistics and Registration Services Bill before Parliament. The Government will go even further, reducing pre-release access to National Statistics to a maximum of 24 hours.’</p> <p>(p.36 paragraph 112-114)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b></p> <p>Following the consultation the rules for pre-release access to official statistics in their final form will be set out in secondary legislation. Only statistics that are deemed by the independent Statistics Authority as complying with these rules will be eligible to be branded as National Statistics.</p>	<p>The Government is also proposing shortly to tighten the rules under which pre-release access can be granted, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limiting pre-release access to a strict maximum of 24 hours, reduced from up to five working days for certain National Statistics at present; and</li> <li>• Requiring that pre-release access be limited to the minimum necessary number of people and the minimum number of statistics, with decision on pre-release access taking into account the need to reduce pre-release access to promote public trust.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Regional Ministers</b></p> <p>‘The Prime Minister appointed Ministers for the English regions on 28 June 2007. There are a range of functions that Regional Ministers will undertake. These are mostly clustered around the responsibilities of the Government Offices and the RDAs [Regional Development Agencies], particularly in relation to economic development.’</p> <p>(p.37 paragraph 116)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b></p> <p>In the last year, Regional Ministers have added value in three key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regional leadership</b> – By working with members, officials and colleagues from all sectors to get beneath the headlines and into the detail of the problems facing the region such as flooding and economic performance and to look for the solutions.</li> <li>• <b>Government Champion</b> – In taking part in key regional events to promote national policies, like the Draft Legislative Programme and the Darzi review of the NHS, and using these events also to explore how the region can draw on its experience to offer solutions back to Whitehall Departments.</li> <li>• <b>Regional Champion</b> – Working with the colleagues within Whitehall to champion the needs of the region and to ensure that the region’s voice is being heard, and to promote the region’s successes.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government is committed to improving scrutiny and accountability in the English regions and Regional Ministers could play a key role in this area. We look forward to the publication of the House of Commons Modernisation Committee’s report of its inquiry into this issue.</p>
<p><b>Reforming the Ministerial Code</b></p> <p>‘The Ministerial Code outlines the behaviour that is expected of Ministers. Until now, it has developed over decades as an amalgam of good practice, but it has become outdated and unwieldy. The Prime Minister has therefore tightened the Code in a number of areas.’</p> <p>(p.39 paragraph 121)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b></p> <p>The Prime Minister published a revised Ministerial Code in July 2007. It is focused on the principles that should guide ministers’ conduct and has been tightened and updated in a number of key areas, including the appointment of a new Independent Adviser on ministers’ interests on 14 January 2008. He will, at the Prime Minister’s request, be able to investigate alleged breaches of the Ministerial Code.</p>	<p>An annual statement covering Ministers’ Interests will be published:</p> <p>The annual List of Travel by Cabinet Ministers overseas will be expanded to include overseas travel by all ministers. The first such list will be published before summer recess.</p>

## Reinvigorating our democracy

It is vital that our institutions are legitimate, trusted and responsive to the people they serve.

Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<p><b>House of Lords reform</b></p> <p>‘The Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor will continue to lead cross-party discussions with a view to bringing forward a comprehensive package of reforms. The basis for this is the free votes of the House of Commons in March 2007. They resulted in majorities for an 80% or 100% elected second chamber. There was also a majority in favour of removing the anomaly of the remaining hereditary peers. The Government is committed to implementing the will of the Commons.’</p> <p>(p.42 paragraph 137-38)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b></p> <p>The cross-party talks have made good progress. Consensus has been reached on a number of key areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-member constituencies</li> <li>• Long, non-renewable terms of office</li> <li>• No reduction in current powers of the chamber</li> <li>• The Lords continuing role as a scrutinising and revising chamber which holds the Government to account.</li> </ul>	<p>White Paper to be published before the summer recess followed by a period of consultation.</p>
<p><b>Freedom of information</b></p> <p>‘The Government welcomed the debate about the confidentiality of MPs’ correspondence with their constituents. The Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor will be working with the Information Commissioner in the coming weeks to produce guidance to public authorities to ensure that they apply the Act in a way that balances openness with need to protect the privacy of constituents.’</p> <p>(p.43 paragraph 140)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b></p> <p>Guidance published in August 2007 by the Information Commissioner.</p> <p>This states that information must not be released where to do so would breach any of the Data Protection principles.</p> <p>The guidance makes clear that public authorities of all types may receive Freedom of Information requests and details how they should be dealt with.</p>	
<p>‘The Government is committed to <b>reducing gender inequality</b> in the representation of people. It wants to keep the law under review, and will if necessary extend the provisions in the Sex Discrimination (Electoral Candidates) Act 2002 beyond 2015 to allow all-women shortlists to continue to be used.’</p> <p>(p.44 paragraph 147)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b> In her speech during the International Women’s Day debate on 6 March 2008, the Leader of the House of Commons set out the Government’s intention to extend until 2030 the right of political parties to have women-only shortlists for Parliament in the new Equality Bill.</p>	<p>Planned introduction of the Single Equality Bill in the next Parliamentary session.</p>

## Reinvigorating our democracy

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Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<b>Election Day</b> 'The Government will consult local authorities and others on the merits of moving the voting day for general and/or local elections from Thursday to the weekend, and on the best way to do this.' (p.46 paragraph 154)	<b>In progress:</b> The Election Day consultation was published on 24 June.  The consultation will take into account the needs of religious groups, to ensure that those with religious objections to voting on a Saturday or Sunday have an opportunity to vote in way that is consistent with their beliefs. It will also consider whether voting at the weekend would be more costly than the current arrangements or if there might be a negative impact on turnout for local elections.	The consultation exercise will be followed by a Citizen's Summit at which a cross section of the public will be invited to consider the barriers to voting and the options available to improve participation levels. Participants at this Summit will be asked to make a recommendation on whether elections should be held at the weekend.
'In line with the Government's Manifesto, it is carrying out a review of the experience of the <b>new voting systems</b> established since 2007 to contribute to the debate.' (p.46 paragraph 156)	<b>Completed:</b> The Voting Systems Review was published in January 2008.	

## Reinvigorating our democracy

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Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<b>Petitions</b> 'The Government believes that people should be able to petition the House of Commons with as much ease as they are currently able to petition the Prime Minister and that there should be a procedure for handling petitions which considers whether each merits a debate in Parliament. The Government looks forward to the further work of the House of Commons Procedure Committee on how to ensure more formal parliamentary consideration of petitions from members of the public.' (p.47 paragraph 161)	<b>In progress:</b> The House of Commons Procedure Committee published a report on e-petitions on 6 April 2008.	The Government will respond to the Committee's report in due course.
<b>Restrictions on protests around Parliament</b> 'The Government will consult widely on the provisions in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act with a view to ensuring that people's right to protest is not subject to unnecessary restrictions.' (p.48 paragraph 166)	<b>In progress:</b> A government consultation was issued in October 2007. The draft Constitutional Renewal Bill includes provision to repeal sections 132-138 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005, which cover demonstrations in the vicinity of Parliament.	The draft Bill is currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee.
<b>Rights of charities to campaign</b> 'The Government will work with the Charity Commission, Capacitybuilders and sector leaders to explore the options for enabling charities and other sector organisations to better campaign on issues that are likely to advance the cause of the purposes for which they have been established.' (p.48 paragraph 168)	<b>Completed:</b> New Campaigning Guidance was published by the Charity Commission in February 2008. The guidance has made it much clearer to charity trustees as to what they can and cannot do in relation to campaigning and political activities.	The Office of the Third Sector is developing a programme focusing on innovative campaigning, and the Office's Grassroots Grants programme will make grants available to small groups, many of which might fulfil a campaigning and advocacy role.

## Reinvigorating our democracy

It is vital that our institutions are legitimate, trusted and responsive to the people they serve.

Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<p><b>Sub-National Review of Economic Development</b></p> <p>‘The Government will soon publish its Sub-National Review of Economic Development which will signal a shift to local authorities, open up the possibility of powerful city regions and give a clearer role for the regions of England.’ (p.50 paragraph 173)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b> The Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration was published in July 2007. In March 2008, the Departments for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, and Communities and Local Government published ‘Prosperous Places: Taking forward the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration’ consulting on reforms to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• streamline the regional tier, introducing integrated strategies and giving the regional development agencies (RDAs) lead responsibility for regional planning</li> <li>• strengthen the local authority role in economic development, including a new statutory duty to assess local economic conditions, and</li> <li>• support collaboration by local authorities across economic areas.</li> </ul> <p>The Government will publish its response to the consultation later this year.</p>	<p>The Government will introduce a Bill in 2008/09 taking forward the recommendations.</p>
<p>‘The Government is considering introducing a duty that requires local authorities to consider and investigate <b>petitions</b> from local communities, and guarantees petitioners and the wider community a response on the issues which have been raised.’ (p.51 paragraph 175)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b> From April 2009, local authorities will have a duty to inform, consult and involve local people in their decisions and services. The Government is also considering the results of a consultation on requiring local councils to respond to petitions, and sees a wider role for petitions.</p>	<p>Next steps will be set out in the Empowerment White Paper. In addition, the duty on Councils to respond to petitions will be included in the Community Empowerment, Housing Economic Regeneration Bill planned for the 2009/10 session.</p>

## Reinvigorating our democracy

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Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<b>Devolved/Participatory budgets</b> 'The Government will explore the possibility of a new provision for local communities to apply for devolved or delegated budgets to fund projects which will benefit the local community.' (p.51 paragraph 176)	<b>In progress:</b> The Department for Communities and Local Government is promoting a range of innovative ways on which local people can be directly involved in local decision-making. One such mechanism is Participatory Budgeting (PB).  Currently there are 22 national PB pilots with other PB projects being undertaken in the UK. The Communities Secretary, Hazel Blears MP, has expressed her ambition for every local authority area to undertake some form of PB by 2012. A consultation setting out the proposed values, principles and standards that should underpin PB was published in April 2008 and responses are currently being considered.	Next steps for devolved budgets and participatory budgets will be set out in the forthcoming Community Empowerment White Paper.
'The Government will work with local authorities and public service providers in England to ensure that there is widespread use of <b>local real-time data</b> to help make local services more accountable to local people' (p.51 paragraph 177)	<b>In progress:</b> The Department for Communities and Local Government has commissioned research into what practices are effective and meet the needs of citizens, on the basis of which it will bring forward proposals to encourage best practice in giving people the performance information they need, when they need it.	The Community Empowerment White Paper will look at how people can find out information in a way they can understand and use.
<b>Lay Governance</b> 'The Government will explore how citizens who have the potential and willingness to contribute to public decision making can be better encouraged and supported to realise that potential, in a much more systematic and cost effective way.' (p.52 paragraph 178)	<b>In progress:</b> This is being considered as part of the follow up to the report on the role of Councillors from the Councillors Commission, and as part of the Empowerment White Paper.	Next steps will be set out in the forthcoming Community Empowerment White Paper.
'The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will work with the Local Government Association to establish a <b>concordat</b> to govern relations between central and local Government.' (p.52 paragraph 179)	<b>Completed:</b> The Local Government Concordat was signed in December 2007. It establishes a framework of principles for how local and central government work together to serve the public.	The concordat is not the end of the story. It is a point from which we can build together to deliver greater devolution of influence, power and control to local authorities and to local communities.

## Britain's future: the citizen and the state

The Government believes that a clearer understanding of the common core of rights, responsibilities and values that go with British citizenship will help build our sense of shared identity and social cohesion.

Commitment	Progress	Next Steps
<p>'The Government will consider how to ensure that new arrivals are well integrated into their local communities... The Government will consider the recommendations of the recent report of the <b>Commission on Integration and Cohesion</b> in this light.'</p> <p>(p.54 paragraph 188)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b> In October 2007, the Chancellor announced a new cross-government PSA (PSA 21) to build cohesive, empowered and active communities. This new PSA demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to cohesion. Our response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CiC) was published in February 2008. We are also investing £50m in cohesion over the next three years.</p>	<p>Guidance for local areas is being brought together under the Cohesion Delivery Framework. This will provide local practitioners with flexible, up to date, organised guidance covering a wide range of cohesion issues to enable them to deliver tailored responses to cohesion locally. The framework will cover generic cohesion issues as well as elements aimed specifically at particular cohesion issues and challenges.</p>
<p>'The Government will now launch a <b>Youth Citizenship Commission</b>, which will examine ways to invigorate young people's understanding of the historical narrative of our country and of what it means to be British citizen, and to increase their participation in the political sphere.'</p> <p>(p.55 paragraph 190)</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b> On 29 February 2008, Professor Jonathan Tonge was approved as Chair of the Youth Citizenship Commission (YCC). 13 Commissioners have been appointed, including three young people between the ages of 15 and 20 years old. The Commission met on 12 June and agreed a work programme. The Commission will undertake a literature review, public and stakeholder engagement and lead on a consultation on whether the voting age should be lowered to 16.</p>	<p>A significant programme of engagement with the public and stakeholders, including consultation on Votes at 16.</p> <p>The YCC will report in spring 2009.</p>
<p>'The Government has asked <b>Lord Goldsmith</b> to conduct a review of citizenship, looking both at legal aspects and other issues including civic participation and social responsibility.'</p> <p>(p.57 paragraph 193)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b> Lord Goldsmith's Review of Citizenship was launched on 5 October 2007 and reported to the Prime Minister in March 2008.</p>	<p>There is much in Lord Goldsmith's review of interest and the Government is considering its proposals in the context of wider reforms including proposals set out in the Green Paper 'The Path to Citizenship', published on 20 February 2008.</p>

## Britain's future: the citizen and the state

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### Flying the Flag

'The Government will consult on altering the current guidance that prohibits the flying of the Union Flag from Government buildings for more than 18 set days in the year.'  
(p.58 box 6)

**Completed:** Following consultation in 2007, the temporary relaxation of the flag flying arrangements which gave UK Government departments the freedom to fly the Union Flag on their buildings has been made permanent.

To celebrate the Union's constituent parts, the Saltire and the Red Dragon may be flown respectively on the Patron Saint's Days of Scotland and Wales, alongside the Union Flag and the wider Whitehall area.

Guidance already allowed for the cross of St George to be flown on UK Government buildings in England with two or more flag poles on St George's Day and, in Scotland and Wales, the Saltire and Red Dragon to be flown on UK Government Buildings on St Andrew's Day and St David's Day respectively.

The Government is considering the greater use of the Union Flag on other public buildings.

Revised guidance will be published shortly.

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'The Government believes that there is considerable merit in a fuller articulation of British Values. Through an inclusive process of national debate it will work with the public to develop a British **Statement of Values** that will set out the ideals and principles that bind us together as a nation.'  
(p.58 paragraph 198)

**In progress:** Since publication of the Green Paper in July 2007 we have been developing a framework for a public engagement process that:

- is inclusive of all communities and nations of the country
- seeks cross-party support and involvement
- is transparent and open, providing continuing feedback to participants.

The proposed model of engagement consists of the following components and is expected to last between six to nine months:

- A launch document setting out the context of the debate
  - A series of town hall style events
  - A significant online programme of engagement
  - A toolkit to assist stakeholders to engage with the process
  - A film competition
  - A series of representative regional events
  - A representative Citizens' Summit.
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**Britain’s future: the citizen and the state**

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<b>Bill of Rights and Duties</b> 'The Green Paper said that "A Bill of Rights and Duties could provide explicit recognition that human rights come with responsibilities and must be exercised in a way that respects the human rights of others. It would build on the basic principles of the Human Rights Act, but make explicit the way in which a democratic society's rights have to be balanced by obligations".'  (p.61 paragraph 210)	<b>In progress:</b> The Government is committed to bringing forward proposals for a Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.	A Green Paper is expected to be published soon.
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