



Governance of Britain: An update

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This note provides an update on the proposals made by the Government in their July 2007 Green Paper on constitutional reform, *The Governance of Britain*. The note sets out each proposal and progress made since the publication of the Green Paper, including the contents of the *Constitutional Renewal* White Paper and draft Bill published in March 2008, and the *Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill* introduced in July 2009.

The information is published here as a table, with links to more detailed information and analysis published by the House of Commons Library in Standard Notes and Research Papers. It is intended as a quick guide to the Government's constitutional reform proposals. The table provides links to key Government documents, debates and decisions of the House of Commons, and select committee papers.

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Contents

- 1 Background 3**
- 1.1 *The Governance of Britain* Green Paper 3
- 1.2 *The Constitutional Renewal* White Paper 3
- 1.3 Other developments 4
- 1.4 *The Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill* 5
- 2 Update Table 6**

1 Background

1.1 The *Governance of Britain* Green Paper

The *Governance of Britain* Green Paper was published on 3 July 2007.¹ The Government's intention was to "forge a new relationship between government and the citizen, and begin the journey towards a new constitutional settlement – a settlement that entrusts Parliament and the people with more power".² The proposals were set out under four headings:

- Limiting the powers of the executive: proposals included reforming several aspects of the Royal Prerogative, increasing Parliamentary scrutiny of public appointments and reviewing the role of the Attorney General.
- Making the executive more accountable: this included proposals to publish a draft legislative programme and revise the Ministerial Code.
- Reinvigorating our democracy: the Green Paper considered increasing public participation in local government and services, to consult on moving the election day to the weekend for general and local elections, and reviewing the right to protest in the vicinity of Parliament.
- Britain's Future: the citizen and the state – this included a discussion of the need to develop a British Statement of Values, and perhaps a British Bill of Rights.

The proposals covered wide constitutional ground, and have implications across government and Parliament.³ The process of consultation and implementation of the proposals has therefore been complicated.

1.2 The *Constitutional Renewal* White Paper

On 25 March 2008 the Government published a White Paper and Draft Bill, *The Governance of Britain: Constitutional Renewal*.⁴ This set out plans to introduce legislation on a number of the proposals first outlined in the Green Paper.

A Joint Committee was established to conduct pre-legislative scrutiny on the Draft Bill. At the Committee's first meeting on Tuesday 6 May, Michael Jabez Foster MP was appointed Chairman. The Committee published its report on 31 July 2008.⁵ The Committee stated that:

We recognise that the Draft Bill is a first step in a wider programme of reforms to the constitution recommended in the Green Paper and we commend the Government for taking these first steps towards its stated objective of making Government more accountable to Parliament. However, we have found it difficult to discern the principles underpinning the Draft Bill and we ask the Government to reflect further on whether "Constitutional Renewal" is an appropriate title. It is clear to us that further work is required before the Bill would be ready for introduction in the next session of Parliament.⁶

¹ Ministry of Justice, *The Governance of Britain*, July 2007, Cm 7170

² *Ibid*, p5

³ For more information see the Library Research Paper 07/72, [The Governance of Britain Green Paper](#)

⁴ Ministry of Justice, *The Governance of Britain – Constitutional Renewal*, March 2008, Cm7342 – I-III

⁵ Joint Committee on the Draft Constitutional Renewal Bill, *Draft Constitutional Renewal Bill*, 31 July 2008, HL 166-I HC 551-I 2007-08

⁶ *Ibid*, Abstract

Other Parliamentary Committees also undertook scrutiny of the Draft Bill. The Public Administration Select Committee held two evidence sessions on aspects of the Draft Bill – they concentrated on matters relating to the Civil Service and reform of the Royal Prerogative. Their report, *Constitutional Renewal: Draft Bill and White Paper*, was published on 4 June 2008.⁷ The House of Commons Justice Committee published a report on the role of the Attorney General on 24 June 2008.⁸ The Lords Constitution Committee submitted a memorandum to the Joint Committee on the Draft Bill.⁹

The Government published their response to the Joint Committee in July 2009 at the same time as the *Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill 2008-09* (see below). The response stated:

The Government agrees with the Joint Committee that the Draft Bill needed further work before being introduced. We are grateful for the consideration given to the Draft Bill by the Joint Committee in pre-legislative scrutiny, and have spent valuable time amending and supplementing the provisions in the Bill in light of their recommendations.

The Government does not agree, however, that the principles of the Draft Bill were difficult to discern. The Bill looked to modernise the constitution by looking to effect changes in the relationship between the citizen, Parliament, and the executive. A fundamental principle of the Government’s approach to constitutional modernisation has been a rebalancing of power, and each of the proposals involved a modification and reduction in the power held by the executive.

...the principles behind the Bill remain essentially the same as the principles behind the Draft Bill: it aims to rebuild trust in our democratic and constitutional settlement by ensuring openness, transparency, and accountability.¹⁰

1.3 Other developments

Other proposals outlined in the *Governance of Britain* Green Paper have been passed to the Modernisation Select Committee to consider. They have published reports on proposals for increasing regional accountability at Westminster, the publication of the Draft Legislative Programme, and an inquiry into recall and dissolution is underway although no oral evidence sessions have yet been scheduled.

The Government published a White Paper on House of Lords reform in July 2008 which set out areas where consensus had been reached during cross-party talks, and recorded areas where there were differences of view. In the foreword to the report, Jack Straw wrote that, “The proposals and options in this White Paper are intended to generate discussion and inform debate, rather than representing a final blueprint for reform”.¹¹ In June 2009 the Government announced that they would be “moving forward” with House of Lords reform. They would first legislate to remove the remaining 92 hereditary peers, and then publish a draft bill “for a smaller and democratically constituted second chamber”.¹²

⁷ Public Administration Select Committee, *Constitutional Renewal: Draft Bill and White Paper*, 4 June 2008, HC 499 2007-08

⁸ Justice Committee, *Draft Constitutional Renewal Bill (Provisions relating to the Attorney General)*, 24 June 2008, HC 698 2007-08

⁹ HC 551 2007-08

¹⁰ *Government response to the report of the Joint Committee on the Draft Constitutional Renewal Bill*, Cm 7690, July 2009

¹¹ Ministry of Justice, *An Elected Second Chamber: Further reform of the House of Lords*, July 2008, Cm 7438

¹² HM Government, *Building Britain’s Future*, p108

The Joint Committee on Human Rights has conducted an inquiry on proposals for a Bill of Rights and Responsibilities,¹³ and the Government published a Green Paper in March 2009.¹⁴ No legislation on this is expected before the general election.

In July 2009 the House of Commons established a new select committee on Reform of the House of Commons which is to consider the scheduling of business in the House of Commons, the appointment of members and chairmen of select committees, the appointment of the Chairman and Deputy Chairmen of Ways and Means, and the public initiation of proceedings in the House of Commons.¹⁵

A number of other developments have also taken place without the need for legislation. These are set out in the table below.

1.4 The Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill

The Queen's Speech at the opening of the 2008-09 Session did not include firm proposals to legislate on constitutional renewal during the Session. A Press Notice released by Downing Street stated that:

The Government continues to work on the proposals in the draft bill with a view to introducing a bill when time allows.¹⁶

Speaking in the debate on the Queen's Speech, Jack Straw responded to questions on the status of the constitutional renewal proposals as follows:

...The constitutional reform Bill is specified in the Gracious Speech. Everyone knows that what has changed since then is the overriding imperative of dealing with the world economic downturn, but the Bill will require parliamentary time. The Queen's Speech states: "My Government will continue to take forward proposals on constitutional renewal, including strengthening the role of Parliament and other measures."

As ever, Her Majesty meant what she said—and that is my intention, too.¹⁷

Lord Tyler, a Liberal Democrat peer, introduced a Private Members' Bill on 31 March 2009 entitled the *Constitutional Renewal Bill [HL]*. This includes wider reaching provisions than the Government's draft *Constitutional Renewal Bill* including provisions for fixed term Parliaments.

On 29 June 2009, the Government published its draft legislative programme and an accompanying document, *Building Britain's Future*.¹⁸ The document stated that the Bill was intended for introduction before the end of this session and gave some detail of the Bill's content.¹⁹

The *Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill [Bill 142 of Session 2008-09]* was introduced to the House of Commons on 20 July 2009. It includes provisions on the Civil Service, the ratification of treaties, the ending of by-elections for hereditary peers, the removal of members of the House of Lords, demonstrations in the vicinity of Parliament, Human Rights

¹³ Joint Committee on Human Rights, *A Bill of Rights for the UK*, 10 August 2008, HL 165-I/HC 150-I 2007-08

¹⁴ Ministry of Justice, *Rights and Responsibilities: Developing our Constitutional Framework*, March 2009, Cm 7577

¹⁵ See SN/PC/5140, *Select Committee on Reform of the House of Commons*

¹⁶ Number 10, *Queen's Speech – Constitutional Renewal*, 3 December 2008,

¹⁷ HC Deb 4 December 2008 c227-228

¹⁸ HM Government, *Building Britain's Future*, Cm 7654, June 2009

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p29 and p108

cases against the devolved administrations, judicial appointments, and matters relating to the NAO. Not all the measures in the Bill were trailed either in the *Governance of Britain Green Paper* or the *Constitutional Renewal White Paper*.

2 Update Table

The table below sets out each heading used in the Green Paper, the progress made on proposal, and whether plans to legislate were included in the Draft Bill published in March 2008. The table also includes links to relevant House of Commons Library briefings for more detailed information. Where possible, links to Government documents, select committee reports, and debates and decisions of the House have also been included.

On 3 July 2008 the Ministry of Justice published their own table showing progress on the proposals made in the *Governance of Britain Green Paper*.²⁰ This accompanied a Written Ministerial Statement made by the Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, Jack Straw, which summarised the progress made. In May 2009 the Ministry of Justice published a further update table.²¹

It is worth noting that not all the provisions in the *Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill* were included in the *Governance of Britain Green Paper*. Full details of the Bill will be available in the Library Research Paper on the Bill, and in the Government's Explanatory Notes on the Bill.²²

²⁰ Ministry of Justice, [Governance of Britain: One Year On](#), July 2008,

²¹ Ministry of Justice, [Governance of Britain: Progress](#), DEP 2009 – 1215

²² For further information please see the Library Research Paper 09/73, [Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill](#) and the Explanatory Notes, [Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill: Explanatory Notes](#)

Progress on the Government's proposals contained in [The Governance of Britain Green Paper](#), July 2007, Cm 7170

See Research Paper 07/72, [The Governance of Britain Green Paper](#), 26 October 2007 for in-depth analysis of the proposals in the Government's July 2007 Green Paper, and individual Standard Notes as referenced below for more detailed information and up-to-date information on each policy area.

Subject	Governance of Britain Green Paper July 2007	Progress made between July 2007 and March 2008	Constitutional Renewal White Paper March 2008	Further developments	Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill	Library Papers
War making powers	Proposed that the Govt should seek the approval of the House of Commons for significant non-routine deployments of the Armed Forces into armed conflict, to the greatest extent possible, without prejudicing the Govt's ability to act to protect national security, or undermining operational security or effectiveness. (para 26)	Publication of consultation paper, War making powers and treaties: Limiting executive powers . Published on 25 October 2007. Consultation ended 17 January 2008	The Govt believed that a detailed resolution is the best way forward, although they did not rule out legislation in the future. (paras 179-226)	Chapter 7 of the Joint Committee on the Draft Constitution Renewal Bill's report (the Joint Committee) looks at war making powers. The Committee agreed that detailed resolution approach was the best way forward (para 318). The Govt's April 2009 table stated that they will take forward proposals for a House of Commons resolution.		RP 08/88, Parliamentary Approval for Deployment of the Armed Forces: An Introduction to the Issues
Ratification of Treaties	Asked whether the process for ratifying treaties known as the "Ponsonby Rule" could be replaced by formal arrangements or statutory provisions (paras 31-33)	Publication of consultation paper, War making powers and treaties: Limiting executive powers . Published on 25 October 2007. Consultation ended 17 January 2008	The Government proposed that the present arrangements for parliamentary scrutiny of treaties should be placed on a statutory footing. (paras 143-166)	Chapter 5 of the Joint Committee's agreed that the Ponsonby rule should be on a statutory footing but also recommended a new Joint Committee on Treaties (para 238).	Part 2 of the Bill puts Parliamentary scrutiny of treaty ratification on a statutory footing and gives legal effect to a resolution of the House that a treaty should not be ratified.	SN/IA/4693, Parliamentary Scrutiny of Treaties

Subject	Governance of Britain Green Paper July 2007	Progress made between July 2007 and March 2008	Constitutional Renewal White Paper March 2008	Further developments	Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill	Library Papers
Dissolution of Parliament	The Prime Minister should be required to seek the approval of the House of Commons before asking for a dissolution. (paras 34-36)	Modernisation Committee inquiry into "Dissolution and Recall" announced in October 2007.		No oral evidence sessions have taken place.		SN/PC/0831, Fixed Term Parliaments
Recall of Parliament	Standing Orders should be changed to allow the Speaker to decide to recall the House, where a majority of MPs request a recall (paras 37-39)	Modernisation Committee inquiry into "Dissolution and Recall" announced in October 2007.		No oral evidence sessions have taken place.		SN/PC/1186, Recall of Parliament
Civil Service Bill	As part of forthcoming legislation on constitutional reform, it would be right to include measures which enshrine the principles and values of the Civil Service in law (paras 40-48)		The Draft Bill contains measures to put the Civil Service on a statutory footing, along with the Civil Service Commissioners. The key values of impartiality, integrity, honesty and objectivity will be enshrined in statute. The Bill allows for the appointment of special advisers. (paras 167-196)	The Public Administration Select Committee proposed changes to part of the draft Bill concerning the Civil Service in their June 2008 report Constitutional Renewal: Draft Bill and White Paper The Joint Committee said that ideally they would like to see a separate Civil Service Act (Chapter 6).	Part 1 of the Bill establishes a statutory Civil Service Commission and requires a code of conduct for civil servants that specifically requires civil servants to have regard to the values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. There is also a requirement for a code of conduct for special advisers.	SN/PC/2863, Civil Service Legislation

Subject	Governance of Britain Green Paper July 2007	Progress made between July 2007 and March 2008	Constitutional Renewal White Paper March 2008	Further developments	Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill	Library Papers
Wider review and reform of prerogative executive powers	The Government will consult on whether individual prerogatives, in addition to those discussed above, should be put on a statutory basis, whether any could be transferred elsewhere or even abolished. (paras 49-51)		The White Paper stated that the Government is conducting an internal scoping exercise of the executive prerogative powers. In the coming months a consultation will be launched on next steps. (paras 245-246)	The Government published its <i>Review of the Executive Royal Prerogative Powers: Final Report</i> on 15 October 2009.		SN/PC/3861, <i>The Royal Prerogative</i>
Role of the Attorney General	The Govt said it would consult on ways of alleviating any conflicts of interest (or the appearance of them). (paras 52-56)	Consultation paper was published on 26 July 2007 (Cm 7192). The consultation period closed on 30 November 2007.	The AG should remain the Govt's chief legal adviser, a minister and a member of the legislature and not have the ability to give direction in relation to a particular case. Special provision would be given to cases which have national security implications and would extend to investigations conducted by the Serious Fraud Office. The oaths of the Law Officers would be modernised. This would not require legislation. The AG to produce an annual report to Parliament. (paras 32-98)	The Justice Committee recommended changes to sections of the Draft Bill in their June 2008 report <i>Draft Constitutional Renewal Bill (Provisions relating to the Attorney General)</i> . The Joint Committee agreed with the Govt that the AG should retain both legal and political functions but believed that the AG should still be able to give a direction to any individual case. They questioned the need for legislation in this area.	The Bill does not contain provisions relating to the Attorney General.	SN/HA/4485, <i>The Law Officers</i>

Subject	Governance of Britain Green Paper July 2007	Progress made between July 2007 and March 2008	Constitutional Renewal White Paper March 2008	Further developments	Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill	Library Papers
Ecclesiastical appointments	The Prime Minister should not have an active role in the selection of individual candidates - for diocesan bishops the Govt proposes that the Prime Minister should only have one name given to him by the Church, not two. The Govt would consult the Church on the changes. (paras 57-66)	Archbishops published a consultation paper in October 2007 and a report to the General Synod in January 2008. The General Synod approved the Archbishops' proposals in the February 2008 Sessions.	The change to the appointments processes for Diocesan Bishops and Cathedral Deans does not require legislation. The Church will legislate by Measure for a number of consequential changes. (paras 254-256)	A draft Church of England Measure has been prepared to amend the <i>Suffragan Bishops Act 1534 - Draft Vacancies in Suffragan Sees and Other Ecclesiastical Offices Measure</i>		SN/PC/4403, Prime Ministerial Involvement in Senior Ecclesiastical Appointments
Judicial appointments	The Govt said that it was willing to look at the future of its role in judicial appointments, and to consider whether there should be a role for Parliament in judicial appointments. (paras 69-71)	Consultation paper, Judicial Appointments , published in October 2007. Consultation ended 17 January 2008.	The White Paper proposed that the Lord Chancellor should be removed from the selection process for judicial appointments below the High Court and to remove the Prime Minister entirely from making judicial appointments. A number of other measures were also proposed. (paras 99-142)	The Joint Committee concluded that it was too soon to propose further significant reforms. Although they accept some of the proposed reforms they conclude that these can wait. They recommended that these clauses should be removed from the Bill. (Chapter 4 and para 378)	Part 6 of the Bill relates to courts and tribunals. It removes the Prime Minister's role in the process for appointing judges as well as making other changes.	SN/HA/4717, Judicial Appointments

Subject	Governance of Britain Green Paper July 2007	Progress made between July 2007 and March 2008	Constitutional Renewal White Paper March 2008	Further developments	Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill	Library Papers
Streamlining public appointments	For certain posts there should be pre-appointment hearings by select committees, and pre-commencement hearings for "market-sensitive" posts. Would draw up a list of posts in consultation with Liaison Committee. (paras 72-81)	Government wrote to the Chairman of the Liaison Committee in February 2008 with list of posts. Liaison Committee responded with report, <i>Pre-appointment hearings by select committees</i> , in March 2008	The Govt will work with the relevant House authorities on any appropriate amendments to House Standing Orders. The Govt will continue to work with the Liaison Committee to agree a final list of suitable appointments. (paras 251-253)	In June 2008 the Govt responded to the Liaison Committee's report. A list of 60 posts was proposed. Some pre-appointment hearings have already taken place		RP 08/39, Parliamentary Involvement in Public Appointments SN/PC/4387, Parliamentary Involvement in Public Appointments
Limiting Ministers' involvement in the granting of honours	In March 2006 Tony Blair made a statement in which he committed neither to add nor subtract from the final list of names recommended to him by the Main Honours Committee. Gordon Brown restated this commitment and the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs and Defence will do likewise. (paras 82-85)					SN/PC/2832 Honours

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Intelligence and Security Committee	The Govt proposed to consult on how the statutory basis of the ISC should be amended to bring the way in which it is appointed, operates and reports as far as possible into line with that of the other select committee. Interim changes could be made within existing legislation e.g. secretariat to be strengthened and debates on reports to be led by the chair of the committee rather than the govt minister. (paras 89-96)		The White Paper announced various changes to the ISC, including to the appointment of committee members, how the ISC operates, and how it reports. The proposals will be put to both Houses for endorsement before they are implemented. (paras 235-244)	The proposals were debated and approved in their entirety by the Commons on 17 July 2008. The Lords approved proposals for an appointment procedure similar to the Commons without debate on 13 November 2008. The Lords also agreed that ISC reports should be debated either in Grand Committee or in the Chamber. Administrative steps have also been taken to enhance the ISC's capabilities. See DEP 2009 - 1215		SN/HA/2178, The Intelligence and Security Committee
National Security Strategy	The Govt will publish a National Security Strategy. The Government would consult Parliament over how the strategy should be scrutinised. (para 97-99)	Govt published the security strategy on 19 March 2008 .		On 22 July 2008 the Prime Minister made a statement on the establishment of a National Security Forum. From autumn 2008 an interim Forum will be established until the proposed NDPB is created. He also announced that he was consulting the usual channels on the establishment of a Joint Committee on the national security strategy. The National Risk Register was published in August 2008.		

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Departmental debates in the House of Commons	The House of Commons should have an opportunity to debate, on the floor of the House, the annual objectives and plans of the major Govt departments. The Govt would ask the Modernisation Committee to consider ways to provide for this. (paras 103-108)	The Modernisation Committee launched an inquiry into ' Debating departmental objectives and annual reports ' on 24 October 2007.		The Modernisation Committee published a report in May 2008, Debating department objectives and annual reports . They suggested that some time could be found in Westminster Hall for such debates, and that the Govt should consider whether existing select committee time could be extended. The Govt responded on 14 July 2008 (HC Deb 14 July 2008 c5WS).		
Independence of the Office for National Statistics	A Bill was already before Parliament which provided for the creation of the new Statistics Board (now known as the UK Statistics Authority). The Govt stated that they believed that appointments to Chair of the Board should be subject to confirmation by Parliament. (paras 112-114)	The Statistics and Registration Service Bill received Royal Assent on 26 July 2007. The Treasury Select Committee took evidence from the nominee for chair of the new UK Statistics Authority on 18 July 2007 and published a report on 23 July. The nomination was subject to a short debate and vote of the House of Commons on 25 July 2007.				SN/SG/4396, Chair of the Statistics Board SN/SG/4472, Independence for official statistics: the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and the new Statistics Board ; RP 06/66, The Statistics and Registration Service Bill

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Draft legislative programme	The Prime Minister will, in advance of the Queen's speech, inform Parliament of the proposed legislative programme for the forthcoming year and a publication will outline the list of proposed bills. (paras 100-102)	Govt published the <i>Draft Legislative Programme</i> , Cm7175, in July 2007. The House debated the draft programme on 25 July 2007. The Modernisation Committee published a report, <i>Scrutiny of draft legislative programme</i> , in January 2008.		The Govt published the Draft Legislative Programme for 2008/09, <i>Preparing Britain for the Future</i> in May 2008. It was debated in the Chamber on 14 May. A general debate on the Draft Legislative Programme was held on 26 June 2008. The <i>Government response</i> to the Modernisation Committee was published in June 2008. In June 2009 the Government published their draft legislative programme of 2009/10, <i>Building Britain's Future</i> .		SN/PC/4398, <i>Draft Queen's Speech</i>
Transparency of Government Expenditure	The Govt proposed to simplify and ensure consistency in its reporting to Parliament, in line with the fiscal rules, at all three stages in the process: on plans, estimates and actual expenditure outturns. The Govt would consult on how to do this. (paras 109-111)	The Liaison Committee published a report <i>Parliament and Government Finance: Recreating Financial Scrutiny</i> in March 2008.		The Govt will formally submit to Parl, by Command Paper, proposals on the alignment of budgets, Estimates and accounts. The Govt also proposed to make changes to the <i>Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000</i> in order to consolidate NDPBs and other central gov bodies, inside the departmental boundary for Supply Estimates and resource accounts to enable alignment to be achieved. (DEP 2009 – 1215)	Provisions are included in Part 8 of the Bill.	See July 2009 Research Paper 09/64, <i>Economic Indicators</i> , pp.ii-iv

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Regional ministers	Regional ministers were appointed on 28 June 2007. The Green Paper said that they would be able to take questions in Parl on the work of regional bodies and on regional strategies. They were to provide a clear sense of strategic direction for their region. (paras 115-118)	The Modernisation Committee launched an inquiry into <i>Regional Accountability</i> in October 2007.		The Modernisation Committee reported on 10 July 2008. It proposed that regional ministers should answer oral questions in Westminster Hall. The Govt response published on 21 July proposed that oral questions should take place in the regional grand committees. The first oral questions in the regional grand committees took place in autumn 2009.		SN/PC/4411, <i>Regional Accountability at Westminster</i>
Regional committees	One way of scrutinising regional ministers and regional policy could be the establishment of nine regional select committees. The Govt asked the House to consider these proposals. (paras 119-120)	The Modernisation Committee launched an inquiry into <i>Regional Accountability</i> in October 2007.		The Modernisation Committee reported on 10 July 2008. It recommended that there should be eight regional select committees and eight regional grand committees. The Govt response agreed with the proposals. Motions to establish regional select committees and grand committees were passed on 12 November 2008 . The House agreed Labour nominations to the Committees on 3 March 2009 . No opposition party proposed members to the Committees. A committee for London and eight regional grand committees have since been established.		SN/PC/4411, <i>Regional Accountability at Westminster</i>

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Ministerial Code	An independent adviser on Ministerial interests was to be appointed. Ministers would be expected to accept the advice of the Business appointments rules which had previously been voluntary.	Sir Philip Mawer appointed as Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests in July 2007. Evidence taken by the PASC from Sir Philip Mawer during March 2008.		PASC published a report, Investigating the conduct of ministers , on 12 May 2008. The Government response was published in October 2008.		SN/PC/3750, The Ministerial Code . SN/PC 3745, The Business Appointment Rules .
Revitalising the House of Commons	Government welcomed the recent report of the Modernisation Committee, Revitalising the Chamber: the role of the backbench Member , HC 337 2006-07 (paras 139-140)	The Government's response to the Committee's report was published on 18 October 2007, and the report was debated in the House on 25 October 2007.		On 10 June 2009 the Prime Minister announced he would establish as select committee on reform of the House of Commons . The House of Commons passed the motion to establish the Committee on 20 July 2009. The terms of reference require the committee to report by 13 November 2009. It will consider the appointment of chairs and members of select committees, the scheduling of business in the House, the appointment of Chairman and Deputy Chairmen of Ways and Means, and the public initiation of debate in the Parliament.		SN/PC/4542, Modernisation: Revitalising the Chamber

Subject	Governance of Britain Green Paper July 2007	Progress made between July 2007 and March 2008	Constitutional Renewal White Paper March 2008	Further developments	Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill	Library Papers
House of Lords Reform	The Government expressed its commitment to further reform of the House of Lords to increase its legitimacy, to make it more representative, and to ensure that it is effective. The Secretary of State would continue to lead cross-party discussions with a view to bringing forward a comprehensive package to complete House of Lords reform. Plans would be developed for a wholly or substantially elected second chamber, and the removal of the hereditary peers. (paras 129-138)	On 25 March the Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, Jack Straw, stated that cross-party talks were continuing and the Government was "on track to publish a White Paper before the summer recess".		The Govt published a White Paper, An Elected Second Chamber: Further reform of the House of Lords (Cm 7438) on 14 July 2008. The paper looked at proposals for either an 80 or 100% elected second chamber, with non-renewable terms of 12 to 15 years. The Government stated that it intends to formulate a comprehensive package of reform that can be put to the electorate as a manifesto commitment at the next general election. The Govt has also indicated that it is considering legislative options it might be able to introduce this session to support the House of Lords in disciplining its members (DEP 2009 -1215)	The Bill includes provisions to end the by-elections which take place for hereditary peers. It also includes clauses to allow for the resignation, suspension and expulsion of peers. In addition, the government has indicated in the draft legislative programme that it will publish draft clauses to introduce elections for the House of Lords.	SN/PC/5135, House of Lords Reform: the 2008 White Paper and recent developments SN/PC/5148, Resignation, suspension and expulsion from the House of Lords SN/PC/5141, Proposals to end the by-elections for the hereditary peers
Westminster and Devolution	Noted that the Union "represents our values and gives them expression to the world". (paras 141-144)	It was announced on 25 March 2008 that the Sir Kenneth Calman has agreed to serve as chair of a commission to review the <i>Scotland Act 1998</i> .		The final report of the Calman Commission was published on 15 June 2009.		SNPC/4744, The Commission on Scottish Devolution – the "Calman Commission"

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Election Day	The Govt proposed to consider the case for moving voting to the weekend for both general and, potentially, local elections. The Government said it would consult local authorities and others on this. (paras 149-154)	On 3 September 2007 the Prime Minister announced that he would establish a Speaker's Conference to consider issues including registration, weekend voting, the representation of women and ethnic minorities in the House of Commons, and in parallel with the Youth Citizenship Commission, lowering the voting age to 16.		On 24 June 2008 the Government published a consultation document on weekend voting. The consultation closed on 26 September 2008. The Govt has not yet published the results. The Speaker announced the Speakers' Conference on 22 July 2008 . The Speakers' Conference published an interim report in July 2009.		SN/PC/4426, Speaker's Conferences ; SN/PC/1747, Reduction in voting age ; SN/PC/954, Compulsory voting ; SN/PC/4469, Weekend voting
Voting systems	The Govt anticipated that the review of electoral systems would be completed by the end of 2007. (paras 155-156)	The Govt published the Review of Voting Systems: The experience of voting systems in the United Kingdom since 1997 (Cm 7304) in January 2008.				SN/PC/4458, Voting Systems in the UK
Making Parliament more representative	The Govt would keep the law under review and, if necessary, extend the provisions in the Sex Discrimination (Electoral Candidates) Act 2002 beyond 2015 (as the Act allows) to allow all-women short-lists to continue to be used. The Govt also invited views on whether to allow wider scope for positive discrimination towards candidates from minority ethnic communities. (paras 145-148)	On 3 September 2007 the Prime Minister announced that he would establish a Speaker's Conference to consider issues (see 'election day' above). On 6 March 2008 Harriet Harman announced that there would be measures in the new Equality Bill to extend the right of political parties to have women-only shortlists for Parliament.		The Speaker announced the Speakers' Conference on 22 July 2008 . It began taking oral evidence in January 2009. The Equality Bill includes provisions to extend until 2039 the right of political parties to have women-only shortlists for Parliament. The Speakers' Conference published an interim report in July 2009.		RP 01/75, The Sex Discrimination (Electoral Candidates) Bill [Bill 28 of 2001-02], SN/PC/4426, Speaker's Conferences . SN/PC/5057, All-women shortlists

Subject	Governance of Britain Green Paper July 2007	Progress made between July 2007 and March 2008	Constitutional Renewal White Paper March 2008	Further developments	Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill	Library Papers
Petitions	The Govt said that it believed that people should be able to petition the House of Commons as easily as the Prime Minister, and that there should be a procedure for handling petitions which considers whether each merits a debate in Parliament. The Government looked forward to further work on the subject to be conducted by the Procedure Committee. (paras 157-163)	The Procedure Committee announced a new inquiry into E-petitions on the 7 November 2007.		The Procedure Committee Report, e-Petitions , published on 6 April 2008, proposed a scheme which would retain the direct involvement of constituency MPs. The Govt response stated that they would provide time for a debate on the report. In May 2009 the Procedure Committee published a report calling for Govt action. The Select Committee on Reform of the House of Commons is looking at public initiation of proceedings at Parliament.		SN/PC/4725, Proposals for an e-petitions system for the House of Commons
Restrictions on protests around Parliament	The Govt announced that it would consult on provisions in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 with a view to ensuring that people's right to protest is not subject to unnecessary restrictions. (paras 164-166)	The Govt published the Consultation paper Managing Protest Around Parliament (Cm 7235) on 25 October 2007. The Consultation period ended on 17 January 2008.	The Govt proposed to repeal sections 132-138 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005. (paras 16-31)	The Joint Committee on the Constitutional Reform Bill supported the Govt's proposal but stated that before the relevant parts of the Serious Organisation Crime and Police Act 2005 are repealed, further work needs to be done to create a framework to ensure the police have adequate powers. (Chapter 2)	Part 4 of the Bill includes provisions on public order and protest around Parliament.	SN/HA/3658, Protest around Parliament

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Right of charities to campaign	The Govt said that it would explore the options for enabling charities and other third sector organisations to better campaign on issues that are likely to advance the cause of the purposes for which they have been established. (paras 167-168)	The Charity Commission published new Guidance on Campaigning and Political Activity in March 2008. The Public Administration Select Committee has held an evidence session to "explore views" on political campaigning by charities.				
Citizenship and national identity	The Govt announced that: they would consider how to ensure that new arrivals are well integrated into their local communities; that they would launch a Youth Citizenship Commission which would examine whether there should be a reduction in the voting age; and that they had asked Lord Goldsmith to carry out a review of citizenship. (paras 180-193)	On 29 February 2008 the Government announced that Professor Jonathan Tonge would chair the Youth Citizenship Commission. Lord Goldsmith published his report Citizenship: Our Common Bond on 11 March 2008.		The Youth Citizenship Commission published its reports on youth citizenship and votes at 16 in June 2009.		SN/PC/1747, Reduction in Voting Age

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Local communities	The Govt stated that it would consult on: extending the right of people to intervene with their elected representatives through community rights to call for action; consult on major decisions through mechanisms such as citizens' juries; powers of redress to scrutinise and improve the delivery of local services; and power to ballot on spending decisions. A concordat was to be established on relations between central and local government. (paras 169-179)	The Government published An Action Plan for Community Empowerment: Building on Success in October 2007. On 12 December 2007 the Government published the Central Local Concordat - an agreement between Her Majesty's Government and the Local Government Association.		A Community Empowerment, Housing and Economic Regeneration Bill, was included in the Draft Legislative Programme published in May 2008. On 9 July 2008 the Government published a White Paper, Communities in Control: Real people, real power (Cm 7427). The Government has published the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill . A draft Community Empowerment Bill is expected during the 2008-09 Session		SN/PC/4713, The Central Local Concordat , SN/PC/4802, Communities in Control: A summary of the 2008 Communities and Local Government White Paper , SN/PC/4790, Participatory Budgeting
British values	The Govt announced a consultation on altering the guidance that prohibits the flying of the Union Flag from Government buildings for more than 18 days a year. They also stated that "through an inclusive process of national debate" it would "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". (paras 194-203)	Consultation document The Governance of Britain – Flag Flying was published in July 2007. The consultation ran until November 2007. While the consultation was taking place, the Government relaxed its policy on flag flying.	The Govt has granted all UK Government departments the freedom to fly the Union Flag from their buildings when they wish. (paras 227-234)	A Green Paper Rights and Responsibilities: developing our constitutional framework was published in March 2009. No legislation is expected before the next general election.		SN/PC/4474, The Union Flag and Flags of the United Kingdom

Subject	Governance of Britain Green Paper July 2007	Progress made between July 2007 and March 2008	Constitutional Renewal White Paper March 2008	Further developments	Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill	Library Papers
British Bill of Rights and Duties	The Govt said that the <i>Human Rights Act 1998</i> should "not necessarily be regarded as the last word on the subject" of Human Rights. They suggested that a Bill of Rights and Duties could give people a clear idea of what we can expect from public authorities, and from each other. (paras 204-210)	Joint Committee on Human Rights launched an inquiry into a British Bill of Rights in May 2007		The Joint Committee on Human Rights published their report <i>A Bill of Rights for the UK?</i> on 10 August 2008. The Govt published their green paper, <i>Rights and Responsibilities: developing our constitutional framework</i> in March 2009. No legislation is expected before the next general election.		SN/PC/4559, Proposals for a British Bill of Rights
Constitution	The Green Paper stated that there was now a growing recognition of the need to clarify what it means to be the United Kingdom. This might, it said, in time lead to a concordat between the executive and Parliament or a written constitution. (paras 211-215)			On 10 June 2009, during a statement on Constitutional Reform, the Prime Minister stated that: "It is for many people extraordinary that Britain still has a largely unwritten constitution. I personally favour a written constitution. I recognise that this change would represent a historic shift in our constitutional arrangements, so any such proposals will be subject to wide public debate and the drafting of such a constitution should ultimately be a matter for the widest possible consultation with the British people themselves." (HC Deb 10 June 2009 cc795-9)		

