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Subject: *Extended deadline*: EVEL and the Future of the Union Inquiry
Importance: High

Dear colleagues,

You are probably aware that the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee has launched an inquiry into English Votes for English Laws and the Future of the Union. While the deadline for submissions was initially the 8th September, I wanted to alert you to the fact that, in light of the high interest in this subject, this has now been extended until mid-October with an intention to begin oral evidence sessions in November. Please find the terms of reference below:

“The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee (PACAC) has just launched a major inquiry into the constitutional implications of the Government’s proposed amendment to House of Commons Standing Orders which will introduce 'English Votes for English Laws.'

This inquiry focusses on the broader constitutional implications of the Government’s proposal to establish a system of ‘English Votes for English Laws’.

This is in response to the desire for more consideration and reflection on the implications of this proposal. While the Procedure Committee will focus on the changes to Standing Orders on the House of Commons, PACAC’s inquiry will seek to evaluate the effect of the change on the UK constitution as a whole.

The Committee therefore invites written evidence on the following questions, dividing the inquiry into two parts:

Part 1 (England)

1. What are the constitutional anomalies which English Votes on English Laws seeks to address?
2. What are the political and constitutional effects of the introduction of ‘English Votes for English Laws via Standing Orders, including on such matters as the durability of the post-referendum settlement between Scotland and the rest of the UK, and on the relationship between the two Houses of Parliament?
3. How consistent is English Votes for English Laws with the House of Commons’ status as a United Kingdom legislature?
4. What is the impact of devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (both in its current form and by way of the Scotland Bill currently awaiting Report Stage in the House of Commons and the forthcoming draft Wales Bill) on making legislation for England?
5. What are the political and constitutional effects for the Union of devolving further tax raising powers to devolved Parliaments and Assemblies?
6. What are the political and constitutional effects for the Union of the continued use of the Barnett Formula?
7. What other factors could destabilise the UK, for example, uncertainty about the UK’s relationship with the EU caused by the forthcoming EU referendum, or renewed demands for a further Scottish independence referendum?

It is possible that, as part of these deliberations, Committee members may also be interested in responses that touch on some additional points:

- 1) *The compatibility of English Votes for English Laws with the continued existence of the Barnett formula*
- 2) *Proposed Standing Order 83J(6) would enable the Speaker to certify a Bill as “relating exclusively to England or England and Wales” should it contain schedules or clauses that have “minor or consequential effects” on other parts of the United Kingdom (including the amendment of Scottish or Northern Irish legislation). What is a “minor or consequential effect” and what are the potential implications or this for the conduct of business at Westminster and more broadly for the Union?*

Part 2 (The future of the Union)

1. What are the alternative means of addressing the constitutional anomalies identified of asymmetric devolution, while taking account of the difference between the four parts of the UK, in size, population, and economic viability?
2. What alternative mechanism could be established for determining the distribution of UK resources between the four constituent parts of the UK?
3. What might the effects be of granting Scotland ‘full fiscal responsibility’? What does this term mean?
4. How could a permanent and durable settlement between the four parts of the United Kingdom best be achieved, taking account of the need to address decentralisation within England?
5. What might be the best means of achieving a consensus across the whole of the UK for such a new settlement?

Deadline for written evidence

The deadline for submissions is **Tuesday 8 September 2015**. Evidence sessions will start in the Autumn.

Where to submit evidence

Written submissions should be submitted via the English Votes for [English Laws and the Future of the Union inquiry page](#), where further guidance and information can also be found.”

Kind regards,

Adam

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