



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales: progress report - April 2023

Progress report submitted to the First Minister, Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, and the Leader of Plaid Cymru.

First published: 22 May 2023

Last updated: 22 May 2023

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Background

The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales has been established by the Welsh Government with 2 broad objectives:

1. To consider and develop options for fundamental reform of the constitutional structures of the United Kingdom, in which Wales remains an integral part.
2. To consider and develop all progressive principal options to strengthen Welsh democracy and deliver improvements for the people of Wales.

The commission membership comprises:

- Co-chair: Laura McAllister
- Co-chair: Rowan Williams
- Anwen Elias
- Miguela Gonzalez
- Michael Marmot
- Lauren McEvatt
- Albert Owen
- Philip Rycroft
- Shavanah Taj
- Kirsty Williams
- Leanne Wood

The commission is supported by an expert panel, which provides advice on a range of specialisms:

- Chair: Gareth Williams, former Special Adviser to the Welsh Government on European Transition
- Jess Blair, Director of the Electoral Reform Society Cymru
- Professor Emyr Lewis, Head of Department of Law and Criminology at Aberystwyth University

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- Auriol Miller, Director of the Institute of Welsh Affairs
- Akash Paun, Head of Institute for Government's devolution programme
- Dr Hugh Rawlings, former Director of Constitutional affairs at the Welsh Government
- Professor Mairi Spowage, Professor of Practice and Director of the Fraser of Allander Institute
- Professor Diana Stirbu, Professor of Policy and Governance at London Met University

Progress

The [commission's interim report](#), published 6 December 2022, concluded there were 3 viable future constitutional options for Wales - each of which presented opportunities and challenges:

- entrenched devolution
- federal structures
- independence

On 3 March, the commission published a [constitutional options analysis framework](#) for analysing and appraising the 3 constitutional options.

Since the previous progress report, the commission has met to receive evidence on four occasions, including 2 workshops.

In evidence meetings, the commission has heard from:

- Rt Hon Gordon Brown
- Professor Jim Gallagher
- Darren Millar MS, Shadow Minister for Constitution and North Wales, Welsh Conservatives

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- Jeff Cuthbert, Police and Crime Commission for Gwent and Chair of Policing in Wales
- Andy Dunbobbin, Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales
- Alun Michael, Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales

The contributors to a workshop on the constitutional/legislative and political implications of the 3 constitutional options identified in the commission's report were:

- Professor Erin F. Delaney, Northwestern University, Chicago
- Professor Aileen McHarg, Durham University
- Stephen Noon, Edinburgh University
- Professor Rick Rawlings, University College London
- Professor Meg Russell, The Constitution Unit, University College London
- Paul Silk, Constitutional Reform Group

The contributors to a workshop on the fiscal and economic implications of the three constitutional options identified in the interim report were:

- David Phillips, Institute for Fiscal Studies
- Guto Ifan, Wales Fiscal Analysis, Wales Governance Centre, Cardiff University
- Professor John Doyle, Dublin City University

Welsh Government and Scottish Government officials with specialist knowledge of relevance to the commission's work participated in the workshops to provide factual information.

The commission is considering the implications of further devolution in relation to: justice and policing, transport, employment, welfare, energy, and broadcasting. As indicated in the commission's interim report, the objective is not to consider these matters afresh, but to understand the latest position and to consider how the topics fit with the commission's analysis of the constitutional

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options set out in the interim report.

To date, the commission has received evidence from:

- ASLEF (written submission)
- RMT (written submission)
- Joe Allen, Wales TUC
- Mark Barry, Professor of Practice in Connectivity, Cardiff University
- Hannah Blythyn MS, Deputy Minister for Social Partnership (and supporting officials)
- Lord Peter Hendy, chair of Network Rail (written submission)
- David Hughes, Public Law Wales
- Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice (and supporting officials)
- Professor Jean Jenkins, Chair of the Commission on the Future of Devolution and Work in Wales
- Gethin Jones, PCS (Prisons)
- Su McConnel, Vice Chair, NAPO Cymru
- Nisreen Mansour, Wales TUC
- Lord Neuberger
- Sarah Rigby, Prison Officers Association
- Nicky Ryan, Police Federation of England and Wales
- Transport for Wales
- Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Climate Change (and supporting officials)
- Rhodri Williams KC
- Dr Victoria Winkler, Director, Bevan Foundation
- Liz Withers, Head of Welsh Affairs, Solicitors' Regulation Authority
- Welsh Government Justice Department officials

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Engagement

The commission's online consultation '**Have your say: the constitutional future of Wales**' closed on 28 February. There were over 2,500 responses. The contributions received by the end of October 2022 informed the content of the commission's interim report. Submissions between October and the survey end will inform the final report.

To continue the national conversation, the commission has established a digital platform Engagement Space (**useyourvoice.wales**) / Y Safle Sgwrsio (**defnyddiadylais.cymru**). The commission's communications channels and public events will direct users to the engagement platform, where new content (e.g. videos, blogs, polls and stories) will be published regularly with the aim of encouraging engagement online.

The commission is undertaking qualitative and quantitative research to identify the views of citizens across Wales. It is working closely with groups and organisations to ensure that all communities in Wales are involved and that their voices are heard.

The commission has held discussion panels at all 4 of Wales's major political party spring conferences.

A series of public events is being planned for the summer to ensure citizens across Wales have an opportunity to join the national conversation. These will include open access roadshows and 'in partnership' appearances at key events taking place in Wales.

In May, the commission is meeting members of the House of Lords and House of Commons in a cross-party event at Westminster, and the co-chairs will be appearing before the Welsh Affairs Committee.

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Reporting

The commission will publish its final report, including recommendations, by the end of 2023.

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