

**Paul Silk meeting with Lord Barry Jones
10 July 2013**

Lord Jones raised the following points:

- Disappointment that the Commission's Terms of Reference excluded structure of the Assembly and matters relating the election of Members, given his assumption that further devolution will be recommended, and that the present 60 Members were insufficient. The membership should be doubled to encourage greater diversity of views, a more substantial opposition and opportunity for specialisation/personal campaigns. Additionally, an improved civil service would be helpful, whose quality and accountability was currently not clearly assessed.
- There was a lack of comparative performance measurement of public services delivered in Wales against other parts of the UK, which the Commission could look at. It was not clear that further powers should be devolved if existing powers were not being used effectively.
- As the majority of people in Wales lived in the East, cross-border issues must be considered by the Commission, to allow access to the best services whether across the border or not, for example in Health. This was particularly pertinent in a time of constrained public services, following the 'dowry' of increased public spending in the first period of devolution.
- North Wales was more cynical about the performance of devolution, and there were questions about the quality and value of the Llandudno Junction office of the Welsh Government.
- On transport, road, rail and ports could be devolved, but the need for cross-border planning remained important, which required ministerial cooperation between governments. The Commission could promote protocols in this area.
- On Policing and criminal justice, it was inevitable that this would be devolved at some point, following a general election (where most parties would likely propose further devolution). Lord Jones would provisionally support this, but there would be a need to ensure that the commitment and focus of a Home Secretary or Lord Chancellor would be continued if their functions were devolved in Wales, and a need to ensure the integrity of the relevant Welsh Minister.
- On broadcasting, there had been a historic trend toward centralisation from more local provision, and there would be a need to ensure impartiality in broadcasting in the future. Additionally, it was not clear whether Wales hosted enough talent for a strong broadcasting sector. It was likely that there would be devolution in the area of broadcasting. It was unclear what the additional costs were to Wales of Welsh language broadcasting (and schooling).
- On the Commission's process to date, Lord Jones asked about the number of attendees at its public events, [and](#) whether the Commission had heard from a mixture of people, or ~~if it was~~ largely [from](#) informed commentators.
- On energy and planning, it was noted that this issue was very sensitive, and [Lord Jones](#) recalled former occasions of local authorities in Wales acting inappropriately with developers, and former politicians going on to take roles

with energy companies in Wales. There was a broader point that Wales ought to be particularly mindful of possible conflicts of interest, given it was a smaller country.

- On inter-governmental relations, it was felt these were ineffective at present, and relations were poor or even hostile. The role of the Secretary of State was not clear and was largely presentational, which had led to some calls for the abolition of the position. The importance of a Welsh presence at the UK Government's Cabinet was stressed, and it was suggested that recent announcements of investment in Wales reflected the personal intervention of the Secretary of State. It was hoped that the Commission could propose protocols or systems to encourage better inter-governmental relations.
- On inter-parliamentary relations, it was felt that the creation of Assembly Members had created some tension with Members of Parliament, and that political parties were continuing to develop their identity since devolution.