

The Smith Commission

Submissions to the Smith Commission

Interim report

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Introduction

Lord Smith is convening cross-party talks to produce, by 30 November 2014, Heads of Agreement with recommendations for further devolution of powers to strengthen the Scottish Parliament within the UK.

As part of this process Lord Smith has been engaging with three groups to get their views and submissions on the further powers that could be devolved: political parties, Scottish civic institutions and the Scottish public. The 5 political parties (represented in the Scottish Parliament) submitted their proposals on Friday 10 October. Scottish civic institutions and the Scottish public submitted their views, proposals and evidence by 5pm on Friday 31 October.

Our approach to outreach

Lord Smith invited submissions from civic organisations and from the public by 5pm 31 October 2014. Lord Smith wrote to 130 intermediaries and networks to bring together proposals and views of their members and the people they represent. Following that, a call for evidence was published on our website on 3 October. A list of the organisations Lord Smith wrote to is attached at Annex A and information about the public call for evidence can be accessed on our website [here](#)

Alongside this, Lord Smith and the secretariat have been attending a number of events to listen to the views of different groups, organisations and communities. They visited groups in Galashiels, Peebles, Stirling, Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Inverness and Edinburgh. A list of the events they attended is at Annex B

Overview of responses

Over a period of 5 weeks, over 400 submissions were received from organisations and groups and over 17,000 emails, letters and signatures on petitions from members of the public.

- Submissions from civic institutions and organisations have been shared with the political nominees and published on our website
- Submissions from the public (with substantive evidence, analysis or data attached) and examples of the broad range of submissions received have been shared with the political parties and will be published on our website by 14th November
- The process of identifying further powers requested and reasons for the powers from all the submissions is continuing and is expected to be completed by 19th November.

This paper sets out an interim analysis of the further powers the public have said should - or should not - be devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

It sets out the broad reasons people gave to support their submissions and highlights a number of cross-cutting themes that have emerged.

Finally, it includes text of the campaigns and petitions received and examples of the range of submissions received by the Commission. These will also be available on our website.

Please note that this is an interim paper and the numbers in this paper have not yet been finalised and are subject to confirmation. A final summary paper will be published week commencing 17/11.

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Analysing the submissions

By 31 October, over 17,000 emails, letters, signatures on petitions had been received from the public and civic organisations and 13,759 have been categorised under the following headings:

- submissions from civic organisations (414)
- submissions from the public that have data, evidence and analysis attached (100)
- petitions and campaign letters (7185)
- submissions that request (3406)
 - devo max or home rule;
 - the vow to be honoured;
 - no further powers to be devolved;
 - full independence
- submissions that set out individual powers to be devolved (2654)

The process of identifying further powers requested and reasons for the powers from all the submissions is continuing and is expected to be completed by 19th November.

Public submissions: Petitions

Of the 13,759 submissions read and allocated to date, just under 4800 are petitions. We have classified a petition as a document that sets out views on further powers and is signed by more than 10 people

Detail	Number
All petitions (the text of each petition is attached at Annex C)	4795
1 Honour the vow (David Muir)	105
2 Home rule (Andrew Bonar)	130
3 Devo max (Iain Cairns)	2126
4 Home rule/ secure autonomy by March 2016	1801
5 Devo max (Colin Hope)	135
6 Home rule (Larbert, Stenhousemuir and surrounds)	346
7 Home rule/ devo max (Gorbals Radical Independence Campaign)	91
8 Honour the vow/ support SG proposals (West Kilbride Hub)	28
9 Principles for considering devolution	33

Public submissions: Campaigns

Of the 13,759 submissions read and allocated to date, over 2300 are campaign letters or emails. We have classified a campaign letter or email as a document that uses all or part of the same text and was sent in by more than 10 people

Detail	Number
All campaigns (the text of each campaign is attached at Annex D)	2390
1 Home rule (with powers listed)	100
2 List of powers to be devolved (no adverse affect for rest of UK)	270
3 No further devolution/ need for 2nd chamber	55
4 Welfare of animals (scientific procedures)	12
5 Honour the vow (with powers listed)	1342
6 Honour the vow	175
7 Devo max	371
8 Devolution of railways	47
9 Devo max	18

Public submissions: Requests for powers - broad themes

Of the 13,759 submissions read and allocated to date, over 3400 requested broad outcomes (devo max, home rule, the vow to be honoured, no change or full independence).

Category	Number requesting	Example campaign email
Submissions requesting “devo max*”	2147	Annex E
Submissions requesting “home rule*”	315	Annex F
Submissions requesting “the vow*” be honoured	471	Annex G
Submissions requesting no further powers to be devolved	259	Annex H
Submissions requesting full independence	214	Annex I

Public submissions: Requests for specific powers - fiscal

Of the 13,759 submissions read and allocated to date, over 2650 contain requests for specific powers. [Note - analysis of requests for specific powers is continuing and the table will be updated once all submissions are analysed]

Powers	Number requesting
Aggregates Levy	176
Air Passenger Duty	184
Capital Gains	179
Corporation Tax	192
Gift Aid	179
Inheritance Tax	177
Income Tax	203
VAT	199
Borrowing	132 (described as fiscal)

specific powers - prosperity, jobs and social justice

Of the 13,759 submissions read and allocated to date, over 2650 contain requests for specific powers. [Note - analysis of requests for specific powers is continuing and the table will be updated once all submissions are analysed]

Powers	Number requesting
Working age benefits	141
Housing benefit	141
Disability [benefit]	152
Pensions	145
Employability	155
Health and Safety	36

Powers	Number requesting
Transport	35
Environment	41
Energy	169
Crown estate	38
Business and consumer regulation	54
Defence	55

Public submissions: Requests for specific powers - lasting democratic settlement

Of the 13,759 submissions read and allocated to date, over 2650 contain requests for specific powers. [Note - analysis of requests for specific powers is continuing and the table will be updated once all submissions are analysed]

Powers	Number requesting
Entrench the Scottish Parliament	
Franchise (general)	
Franchise (16-17 year olds)	*NOTE: We are in the process of providing a breakdown by subject area. At the moment we have an aggregate total of 69 requests covering constitution/ electoral processes
Recall	
Right to referendum	
Other constitutional	
Broadcasting	84

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Why people said they wanted further powers devolved

Many submissions did not elaborate in great detail on the reasons why they wanted the powers. The most commonly occurring reasons for further powers included:

1. The ability to put specific outcomes at the heart of public policy (control where money is spent and the amount of money spent) where people felt that either
 - a. the people of Scotland want a different outcome to the rest of the UK or,
 - b. the circumstances in Scotland were unique and required control over levers to address those circumstances.
2. Increased accountability of the Scottish Parliament to the people of Scotland for the money it spends
3. A desire for federalism

The outcomes people want to have control over in Scotland

- There were a number of broad outcomes that people want to have the levers to control:
 - building a fairer society;
 - tackling child poverty;
 - eradicating inequalities;
 - driving economic growth
- There were a number of specific issues that people want devolution to address:
 - protecting the NHS (from privatisation and/ or TTIP)
 - enshrining/ protecting human rights (ECHR)
 - banning the imposition of fracking (even where they said energy policy should remain reserved)
 - removing Trident (even where they said that defence and security should remain reserved)
 - maintaining membership of the EU

Why people said they did not want further powers devolved

Similarly to those who said they wanted further powers devolved, many of those who said they wanted no powers did not elaborate in great detail.

The most commonly occurring reasons included:

- Protect the cohesion of, and risk pooling across, the UK - including the single market and the “social union”
- Concerns about higher levels of risk for Scotland
- Further powers would cause detriment to the UK
- Use current powers first - they are not used fully at the moment
- Further devolution as a route to independence