GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC POLICY

Diploma stage examination

6 December 2007

From 2.00pm to 5.00pm
plus ten minutes reading time from 1.50pm to 2.00pm

Instructions to candidates

*There are **five** questions on this question paper*

*Answer **four** questions in total*

Both compulsory** questions from **Section A
Two** of the three questions from **Section B

*Question 1 in Section A carries, in total, **50** marks*
*Question 2 in Section A carries, in total, **20** marks*
*The questions in Section B each carry a total of **15** marks*

Where a question asks for a specific format or style, such as a letter, report or layout of accounts, marks will be awarded for presentation and written communication.

AT THE HEART OF YOUR CAREER

PRE-SEEN MATERIALS

These materials are intended to introduce and illustrate the theme of Question 1 of the Governance and Public Policy examination.

The content of the CIPFA Open Learning Material (OLM) is sufficient for students to successfully address the issues relating to the pre-seen materials in Question 1. But you may also find it useful to study other materials, in addition to the OLM, which will help you to further develop your understanding of the theme.

Examples and illustrations, drawn from such further study, will be awarded appropriate credit by the Examiner, where they are relevant to the requirements of the questions set.

Extracts from *The Guardian*, *The Independent, The Times* and *The Observer* newspapers.

From The Guardian, 15 March 2007

Lords vote resoundingly against plans for reform of upper house

· We push ahead with elections, say ministers

· Peers' decision 'in line with expectations'

By Will Woodward

The government is to push ahead with plans for electing members to the House of Lords despite peers' emphatic rejection of the idea. The Lords voted yesterday by a majority of 204 against MPs' favoured option of an all-elected second chamber, and 240 in favour of an all-appointed upper house.

As in the Commons, the biggest majority of the votes taken was against Tony Blair's preferred 50-50 split between appointed and elected peers.

The vote demonstrated peers' intentions to resist elections in negotiations with the Commons.

But ministerial sources said that the Lords vote was entirely in line with expectations and would not reduce the impact of last Wednesday's vote by MPs in favour of an all-elected chamber. The MPs also voted, by a smaller majority, for an 80% elected chamber.

Jack Straw is to chair a meeting of the cabinet's constitutional affairs committee to consider the government's position, before reconvening the joint committee on Lords reform, which includes main party frontbenchers from the Commons and Lords, as well as bishops and cross-bench peers. A draft bill could appear by the summer recess.

One ministerial source said: "I don't think it changes things drastically. The message from the Commons is pretty clear. There is a clear mandate for an elected element."

Much still depends on the priority Gordon Brown gives to the issue if, as expected, he takes over from Tony Blair in the summer. Mr Straw has yet to rule out proposing that the upper house includes a 20% nominated element, an idea backed by MPs - albeit by a smaller majority of 38 - including Mr Straw himself, by the Conservatives' leader, David Cameron, and by the leaders of the Tories and Liberal Democrats in the Lords.

Lord Falconer, the lord chancellor, made clear he was opposed to an all-elected second chamber, arguing that the constitutional ramifications were not worked out.

In an article for the Guardian's Comment is free website, the pensions minister, James Purnell, today calls for a new settlement where the Lords would continue to be able to amend legislation on a majority vote. But if MPs overturned that amendment and sent it back to the Lords, peers would need a two-thirds majority to insist on their change, Mr Purnell said.

This "primacy lock" will preserve, Mr Purnell argues, "the Lords' power to revise [and] codifies the primacy of the Commons". He believes it "enables decisive government, but not absolutism".

Peers turned out in droves to vote and speak, some 130 speeches being made on Lords reform in two days of debate, culminating in yesterday's vote. Lord Irvine, in his first speech since being sacked as lord chancellor in 2003, spoke in favour of an all-appointed chamber.

Last night Lord Howe, the former Conservative chancellor, told the Guardian that the government had to show "sincerity" in its public promise to take account of the Lords vote. "You have to question what possible benefit to the performance of this house there is in changing it." Even a chamber with 80% elected and 20% nominated was "tantamount to abolishing the House of Lords", he said.

Lord Norton, the Conservative peer and constitutional expert, said that critics of the government's plans accepted the need for some reforms. He supported limited measures proposed in a bill last night by Lord Steel, the former Liberal Democrat leader, and Lord Avebury, a Liberal Democrat hereditary peer, including the end of byelections to replace the 92 hereditary peers who still remain, the appointment of a commission to recommend life peerages to the crown, and expulsion of peers convicted of criminal offences.

But Lord McNally, leader of the Liberal Democrats in the Lords, said that he was disappointed by the peers' vote. "It is now up to the House of Commons to assert its primacy," he said. Lord Strathclyde, Conservative leader in the Lords, said the Commons vote had "created a new climate", But he added: "The government's white paper failed because it was a fudge and left many issues unresolved. These must now be addressed positively and constructively."

How they voted
Lords voted last night:
By 361 to 121 in favour of a fully-appointed second chamber
By 326 to 122 against a fully-elected second chamber
By 336 to 114 against an 80% elected chamber
By 409 to 46 against a 50% elected chamber
Without a vote against a 40% elected chamber
Without a vote against a 20% elected chamber

From The Observer, 10 June 2007

It's not too late to bring Parliament back to life.
Gordon Brown can make a clean break with the Blair years of sofa government.
But first he must restore the power and prestige of our ruling institutions.

By Henry Porter

A good quote from Churchill appears in Tory MP Ken Clarke's 'Democracy Task Force' report. On leaving the Commons in one of the darkest moments of the First World War, the great man said: 'This little place is what makes the difference between us and Germany ... this little room is the shrine of the world's liberties.'

Tony Blair has never shown the thrill and grand romance that formed the centre of Churchill's political being. To modernising New Labour, the quotation seems bufferish sentiment made for another age. Instead of revering Parliament, Blair disparaged and bypassed it, imposing measures that undermined the Commons' power to scrutinise legislation and bring the executive to account.

It is these policies, surely the expression of personality rather than any coherent philosophy, that have caused a disturbance in the constitutional life of the country and which have now led to discussion about how to strengthen Parliament and whether to place a new, homegrown system of rights beyond Parliament's reach. These two aims may be at odds, but let us first be clear that Parliament's role and individual rights and liberty would not both be on the agenda if it were not for the carelessness and depredations of the Blair government.

Jack Straw has floated the possibility of a written constitution. Off-the-record conversations at the Institute of Public Policy Research think-tank have ranged across national questions and a written constitution; there has been a seminar at 11 Downing Street on these matters and a gathering at Hay literary festival of lawyers, writers, scientists and administrators turned into a fascinating exchange about the possibility of placing a code of rights - specifically homegrown - beyond the meddling of future Parliaments. Added to these is Clarke's excellent report which suggests ways of rolling back the executive and giving Parliament more power and the people greater expression in the business of the Commons.

There is something in the air but not yet a wind of change. The problem is that the three subjects - parliamentary independence, a bill of rights and relations between England and Scotland - all tend to merge into one intractable, befuddling mega-issue. People tend to focus on one area to the exclusion of the others. Those who refuse to concede the reality of Labour's attack on rights and liberty think only about the national question and worry themselves sick about Britishness.

Those, like me, concerned about centralisation of authority, the loss of liberty and rights, as documented in the new film Taking Liberties, tend to the view that the priorities are Parliament and a bill of rights. No matter what the intelligence and wisdom applied, the issues swirl like a dust storm - dry, heated and without much substance. We need leadership and a clear path through it all, which may be provided by Gordon Brown; on the other hand, it may not.

The crucial point is that we must do the accounting on Labour's last 10 years and that involves wrenching admissions from the ranks of New Labour about Blair's attitude to Parliament and civil liberties. It will be just as hard as getting them to concede the disaster of the Iraq war. But let us not forget the sour little irony that the passing of the Human Rights Act inaugurated Blair's campaign against rights that spread through every possible legislative avenue.

The HRA, like the Freedom of Information Act, became the rolling alibi for any number of shifty Labour footpads. Meanwhile, Blair developed his theory of selective rights, rights that were, in fact, privileges allowed to only those the government thought deserving. At least he has been open about it. When three men on control orders absconded recently, he wrote: 'We as a country have decided that ... the threat to public safety does not justify radically changing the legal basis on which we confront terrorism. Their right to traditional civil liberties comes first. I believe that is a dangerous misjudgment.'

All you need to know about Blair's approach to civil liberties is here. It is this attitude which has allowed rendition flights to use British airports - with or without the bound and terrified victims of US torture programmes - and which has ignored the disgrace of Guantanamo. He simply doesn't get the principle that rights must be applied equally to the innocent as well as suspects and those convicted of crimes. That is the wonder and the very great burden of a system of rights and it is neither modern or pragmatic to abandon that principle.

The interregnum ends soon and the new Prime Minister, presently lost in an unfathomable and gloomy contemplation of his first 100 days, must address all this quickly. His instincts about the propriety of government appear good. Career civil servants are being appointed as advisers on international relations and Cabinet Secretary Gus O'Donnell, is proposing changes to the way Number 10 is run. Meetings will be minuted, sofa government will end.

But this is no more than changing the wallpaper. If he is to be a great Prime Minister, as opposed to someone who simply wields the power of the office, Gordon Brown will need to provide an intellectual synthesis of the three areas - parliamentary independence, liberty and rights and the union between England and Scotland.

The paper produced by the Conservatives Democracy Task Force is important because it is fair and portrays Parliament as it is - the loss to the media of authority and responsiveness, the increased workload of MPs, particularly with constituents and pressure groups, the tyranny of whips over select committee appointments, the lack of resources for important select committees, the failures in scrutiny and ministerial accountability and the all-important loss of public faith.

Few will disagree with Clarke's suggestions of replacing the whips' role in the appointment of select committee chairmen with a ballot of the whole house, of creating more scope for timely debates and reducing government control over the timetable. I like the idea of Commons committees with the power and independence of US congressional committees. Why not allow e-petitions to spark debates? Let's give more power to the committee overseeing the European affairs. Let's have more private member's bills. Let's see select committee chairmen bring their reports to the chamber for debate. Let's have more debate. More argument. More cross-party groups. More goddam life. Anything is better than the chamber of the living dead that this shallow, unread 'modernising' regime created.

Brown will probably steal some of the best suggestions and fill the gaps in Labour policy, even though there are good reasons to suspect he has 'executive power' tattooed somewhere above his hairline.

The interesting part of the Clarke report, which is essential reading, is that in seeking to restore life and power to Parliament, there is an implicit argument against a bill of rights because such a bill would place certain areas of law beyond MPs' reach. That challenges the principle of parliamentary sovereignty. Power would pass to unelected judges. I have few problems with this, given the judiciary's record in standing up to Blair, but the loss of parliamentary sovereignty, even in its current limp manifestation, would be a profound change in our constitution and this needs care and consideration. For one thing, it might weaken Parliament further.

Parliament is at the heart of the crisis of Britishness. If renewed in the way that Clarke suggests, it will come to reassert British values because values don't just appear out of the blue; they are spawned by the proper functioning of ancient institutions. New Labour believes that anything old should be ignored, sidelined or reinvented in the hideous new language of pro-social citizenship and that is one of the reasons it has failed the country's primary institution - Parliament.

By the way, if we are to have a day that marks Britishness, why not 15 June, the date on which Magna Carta was signed at Runnymede in 1215? In the meantime, the best we can do is to restore the shrine to the world's liberties.

From The Times, 20 June 2007

Raising hopes risks lower spirits

By Peter Riddell

The one certainty of a Gordon Brown premiership is that we will have lots of talk about the constitution and the way we are governed. This is about the only issue on which he has been firm during his non-campaign. It looks the perfect costless option for him, with plenty of potential political gains and very limited calls on the Treasury. Yet there are also big risks of raising expectations.

Mr Brown believes that many of Labour’s current problems derive from a loss of trust in the Government and in politicians generally, everything summarised glibly by the terms spin and sleaze. Some of that is associated with Tony Blair personally because of Iraq. Mr Brown naturally wants to highlight a change in style: to signal that a new proprietor is in charge.

The emphasis will be on reasserting the role of the Civil Service: for instance, the special 1997 order in council allowing special advisers, now just Jonathan Powell, to give orders to officials will be scrapped, although this will mean little in practice. There will be talk of restoring Cabinet government, even though the appointment of Jeremy Heywood as domestic policy adviser and strategist looks like a step towards creating a prime minister’s department in all but name.

Mr Brown has talked of building “a shared national consensus for a programme of constitutional reform”. That has already fuelled an eager debate in the reform lobby. His remarks have been seen, mistakenly, as support for a written constitution. But he has been more cautious, referring just to a “better constitution”.

This is a fraught area. It is all very well to have concordats or understandings about the roles of central and local government, and the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen. But how far should, and will, the courts be involved? And what does that mean for parliamentary sovereignty?

Mr Brown favours a wide public debate. Absolutely right. He is a fan of citizen's juries and similar deliberative tools. But will he go down the route of a popular assembly or convention to write a new constitution? There is a big difference between public consultation and direct democracy. Electronic petitions and web discussions are an important means of strengthening the representative system but are not a substitute for it.

Parliament should remain at the centre of reforms. There is no shortage of ideas, from think-tanks, from Kenneth Clarke's task force and, this morning, in a persuasive report from the cross-party Modernisation Committee, chaired by Jack Straw. Its main proposals would allow more up-to-date questions and debates: for instance, the last 10 to 15 minutes of departmental question times would be for open, topical questions, and there would be a new weekly 90-minute debate in prime time on a big issue of the day. These proposals could help to make the Commons more central to media and political discussion.

There is plenty to do, leaving aside Lords reform, party funding etc. But Brown and his new Leader of the Commons need, above all, to be clear on what they are trying to do, and how. "May a thousand flowers bloom" may sound like a good theme for a prime minister eager to appear new, but next comes disappointment and charges of betrayal.

From The Independent, 4 July 2007

The battle over government that has raged since Magna Carta

By Ben Chu

Yesterday Mr Brown referred to the British Constitution as "unwritten". That is misleading. A more accurate description would be "un-codified". In common with the citizens of other countries, subjects of the British Crown enjoy certain legally prescribed rights and freedoms. And like the governments of other nations, British administrations are bound by the chains of law and convention.

The difference is that the various Royal Charters, Acts of Parliament and legal rulings that make up the framework of proper British governance have never been gathered and written down in a single legal document in the style of, for example, the Constitution of the US.

Up until the 19th century, the history of the British constitution was, in large part, the history of the struggle for power between the monarch and the aristocracy. In 1215 a coalition of disgruntled barons forced King John to sign the Magna Carta (or Great Charter), left, guaranteeing the right for freemen to be judged, not by the king, but their peers. The monarch was also forced to pledge that "to no one will we deny or delay right or justice", a significant undertaking at a time when rulers enjoyed power unchecked by formal commitments.

The dispute over the limits of royal power rumbled on over the following centuries but it exploded again with great force in the 17th century during the reign of King Charles I. A period of turmoil culminated in the so-called "Glorious Revolution". In 1688, a collection of peers deposed James II and invited Prince William of Orange and his wife Mary to become joint sovereigns on the condition that they acquiesce to some rigid restrictions on the power of the monarchy and guarantees of the rights of parliament. This settlement was enshrined in the Bill of Rights, which guaranteed freedom of speech, frequent parliaments and free elections. This settlement, perhaps more than anything else before or since, was the basis for our system of parliamentary sovereignty. But still only a minority of rich men were entitled to vote. It took a succession of reform acts to widen the franchise.

From The Guardian, 4 July 2007

A new sort of government

Leader

Gordon Brown got it absolutely right in his admirable speech about the future of the British constitution. The words spoke for themselves: "The current movement for constitutional reform is of historic importance. It signals the demand for a decisive shift in the balance of power in Britain, a long overdue transfer of sovereignty from those who govern to those who are governed, from an ancient and indefensible crown sovereignty to a modern popular sovereignty, not just tidying up our constitution but transforming it."

The only slight problem with these words is that they were uttered by shadow chancellor Gordon Brown in a lecture to Charter 88 in March 1992. Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who rose in the Commons in July 2007 to deliver his much anticipated - and gratifyingly unleaked - statement on constitutional reform, has scaled back some of his ambitions after 15 years. Yesterday's announcement does not aim to transform the British constitution. It does not mark Mr Brown as a latter-day Tom Paine. It is not a revolutionary vision. The monarchy remains in place, as does the established church. The electoral system remains unreformed. A written constitution, a new bill of rights, a restatement of British sovereignty based on the people rather than the crown or even parliament - these are all matters for another, and possibly a still very distant, day.

And yet the prime minister's manifesto is far more than just a tidying-up exercise. At its heart, Mr Brown's package of measures embodies two basic insights. The first says that constitutional arrangements genuinely matter in defining the kind of society we are, while the second says that we can do them very much better than we have been managing to do. Some Labour MPs still do not understand this. For many of them, pluralism is a form of lung disease, not a principle of political legitimacy. But Mr Brown gets what it is about. His new constitutional settlement, he told MPs, is essential to our country's future. Without it we cannot deal with the challenges of security, economic change and tense communities. This is not just rhetoric. Mr Brown is right that the popular legitimacy of politics and governance must be renewed if ministers are to be able to do the things they want and need to do to make this a more just and more civilised society.

The range and detail in the statement is imposing, though occasionally misleading. The impression that Mr Brown is embarking on some vast self-denying ordinance as prime minister is both true and not true. It is true, for instance, that a future PM at the head of a minority government (possibly even Mr Brown himself) may curse the abolition of the power to call a general election without parliamentary sanction, but it is not true that all the powers of which Mr Brown is divesting himself really mean all that much anyway. Even the important power to take the country to war is now, de facto and post-Iraq, in parliament's hands already.

But on issue after issue Mr Brown offers progress. The list is impressive: national-security policy, the attorney general, civil-service independence, national statistics, the ministerial code of conduct, the parliamentary timetable, select committee powers, House of Lords reform, local government, public consultation, regional rights, devolution, electoral law, rights of protest. Mr Brown had something important to say on all of them - and there are many others buried away in the green paper. The plans all need to be carefully scrutinised, and some may be less radical than they appear. The package will certainly not be enough for many, but it is a bold initiative overall which, at the very least, has put a host of issues back in play politically. The clammy hand of caution may still be on his shoulder at times, but Mr Brown has taken a large step towards offering Britain a new, better and more honourable system of governance.

From The Times, 5 July 2007

Does power to the people mean democracy or direct participation?

By Peter Riddell

The Brown Government has discovered the People. The secret garden of the Westminster village is being opened up, and the public are being invited in. But on what terms? The constitutional Green Paper is a Catherine wheel of ideas sufficient to fill several Queen's Speeches. Both there and in yesterday's statement on the NHS (where the people appear as patients), the Government is treading a fine line between representative democracy and direct participation.

There is little dispute now that voters have a right to be involved between elections, rather than just every four or five years at the ballot box. E-mail and more energetic MPs have resulted in a huge increase in communications with constituents. Commons committees are also consulting more via the internet. Gordon Brown and David Cameron keep insisting that they are listening. But this appears a one-way process, in which the public are asked to comment on, and approve, leaders' views. There is now widespread support for improving procedures for public petitions to the Commons, at present largely a formality.

More than 4.4 million people have signed petitions to the Prime Minister since last November, but this has been a messy process since the petitions do not produce anything except an official response. Far better would be a version of the Scottish system where petitions are assessed and some are then considered by specialist committees. This has led to specific action and remedies. Petitioners know their concerns are being seriously considered, while decisions remain with legislators.

Mr Brown and Mr Cameron have talked of a trigger mechanism so that if a certain number of people sign a petition, it will be debated by MPs. But how far should this be taken? Some supporters of direct democracy favour a right of public initiation of legislation, though MPs would have the final say.

Implicit in these calls, as in the Power report, is a mistrust of the party system. The danger is of empowering vocal minorities of the active rather than the public as a whole. A representative system allows everyone a voice with parties providing coherence between competing minority claims. At a local level, however, the Government has talked of extending the right of people to intervene with their elected representatives through community rights to call for action; duties to consult through citizens' juries; powers of redress; and powers to ballot on spending decisions. (There are echoes of these views in yesterday's NHS statement.) There is scope for more public involvement locally, but, again, does community mean just the vocal and active, or everyone? The right to have a say, especially over decisions affecting everyday lives, is crucial. But, as the Green Paper says, "creating a more participatory democracy requires a healthy representative democracy".

The Government needs to clarify the distinction between popular consultation and decision-making. Ministers might start by trying to establish a consensus (highly unlikely) on when, and if, national referendums should be held. Ever since the Irish Home Rule debates of a century ago, staunch defenders of parliamentary sovereignty have liked to invoke the People when they fear how MPs will vote. It is time for clarity

From The Guardian, 9 July 2007

The missing link

Leader

"The best answer to disengagement from our democracy," thundered Gordon Brown last week, "is to strengthen our democracy." In line with that judgment, he advanced praiseworthy initiatives - ranging from citizens' juries to community kitties - designed to restore people's faith that their voices will be heard. Nothing is more central, however, to the strength of democracy than the way votes are counted. Citizens faced, as so many are at the ballot box, with a choice between disregarding their true preference and wasting their vote, will never feel engaged with the process of government. Despite this incontestable truth, the new prime minister saw no immediate need to reveal his hand on electoral reform.

Mr Brown was not, though, entirely silent on the question. He refreshed an almost-forgotten manifesto commitment, to review the various voting systems of the UK. That review can hardly fail to expose that first-past-the-post, once seen as the sole British way to do business, now renders the Commons the odd one out. For in the Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly, parties that would be short-changed are now given top-up seats to even things out. And voters' second preferences, always ignored in the past, now come into play in choosing the London mayor and Scottish councillors. In the European parliament already, and in an elected House of Lords, if it arrives, it is near-universally accepted that something more subtle than winner-takes-all is required.

The same logic should be applied to the Commons; narrow political considerations, however, could stop this from happening, just as it did when Tony Blair sidelined the Jenkins commission in 1998.

Over the weekend, Labour was forced to share power in Wales; two months earlier, a chaotic election in Scotland saw the party forced out entirely. Many Labour MPs will look on and conclude it is better to leave things alone - especially when a poll yesterday showed the government has the modest lead which could deliver another outright win. Such cynical thinking, however, is not in the party's enlightened self-interest. The Celtic difficulties in the end flow not from the voting system, but from a loss of support. When the tide of opinion turns, the workings of the voting system can change too. Labour assumes at its peril that its bias will keep it in power forever. And if reform were embraced, then the Liberal Democrats, who have so much to gain, may be encouraged to concentrate their fire on the Conservatives - which, as Tony Blair well understood, is something that can greatly help Labour.

There are signs that Jack Straw, who has cabinet responsibility for elections, may see things this way, and is ready to support a shift to the alternative vote. This retains the responsibility each MP owes to an individual constituency, a strength of the current system, but also counts the second-choices of those whose first vote is for no-hoper candidates. It thus resolves the psephological tussle between the heart and head - people can vote as they like, and not waste their vote. It should make things fairer for the Lib Dems as well, who would, perhaps, have a dozen extra MPs with this system.

But the alternative vote is emphatically not proportional representation. Indeed, for some Labour loyalists, that may be the attraction. In 2005 Labour's mere 35% of votes became 55% of the seats; under alternative vote it would have enjoyed even more inflated success. A more thorough-going reform, such as that proposed by Lord Jenkins, is needed to make fair votes a reality.

That would have meant fewer Labour seats last time round, so Mr Brown will no doubt hesitate about including it in the next manifesto. But if he is serious about restoring political engagement, there is no alternative. Votes will always remain the most important link between the government and the governed. Making them fairer is the missing link in Mr Brown's plans to re-engage the two.

From The Guardian, 20 July 2007

Straw delays Lords reform until after general election

By Patrick Wintour

The justice secretary, Jack Straw, yesterday put Lords reform on ice until after the next general election, saying the best way to make progress was to secure clear manifesto commitments to a mainly elected upper house from all three main parties.

Such a cross-party agreement would make it possible constitutionally for the Commons to force through a largely elected second chamber, on the basis that it cannot override the manifesto commitments of all three parties.

Mr Straw was reporting yesterday to the Commons on cross-party talks he has held following the overwhelming vote in the Commons in March for a wholly elected, or 80% elected second chamber. He defended himself from charges that he is yet again slowing the process of Lords reform, saying: "The issue is really one of haste and speed. If we are too hasty, the matter will fall." He added: "We need a clear manifesto commitment, then we can get the measure through."

Mr Straw insisted the Commons must retain primacy over the second chamber, and accepted that his personal preference, a 50% elected chamber, would not happen.

It has been clear for months that Gordon Brown has not been keen on seeing his legislative programme this side of a general election sidetracked by a major row with the second chamber over Lords reform. It is possible that the prime minister will hold an early election next spring.

Mr Straw told MPs he will continue to hold talks over the next few months on a range of outstanding issues, including powers, electoral systems, financial packages, and the balance and size of the house, including diversity and gender issues. He said the talks will also cover the transition towards a reformed house in detail, including the position of the existing 92 life peers and "the need for action to avoid gratuitously cutting Conservative party representation in the Lords when and if the remaining hereditary peers are removed".

Divisions within the Conservative party were exposed yesterday when Sir Patrick Cormack pointed out that the majority of voting Tory MPs in March opposed an 80% or wholly elected Lords. By contrast the Tory MP for Buckingham John Bercow urged Mr Straw not to be "intimidated or slowed down in anyway by the reactionary, antediluvian, troglodyte forces in all parties who oppose reform".

Due to such divisions David Cameron has told peers that Lords reform is a third term issue for him.

SECTION A (Compulsory – answer both questions)

1

This question is based on the pre-seen materials - extracts from *The Guardian*, *The Independen*t, *The Times* and *The Observer.*

- **Requirement for question 1**

(a) A theme that is discussed by several of the newspaper extracts is Parliament's diminishing ability to scrutinise legislation and to bring the core executive to account.

(i) What is meant by the *core executive*? *2*

(ii) Explain the ways in which the House of Commons has traditionally scrutinised the core executive. *6*

(iii) Explain the process by which Parliament has traditionally scrutinised legislation. *4*

(iv) What factors do some observers suggest have tended to limit Parliament's ability to scrutinise both legislation and the core executive? *4*

(v) Some commentators express the view that public interest is best served by strong, unfettered government that militates against effective day-to-day parliamentary scrutiny of legislation and the core executive. Outline arguments that are typically presented in support of this view. *4*

(vi) Apart from scrutinising legislation and the core executive, explain the other functions of the House of Commons. *3*

(b) Many of the newspaper extracts refer to the rejuvenation of the debate about constitutional reform, with some commentators suggesting that a Bill of Rights and Duties setting out the rights and responsibilities of citizens and government and, eventually, Britain's first written constitution may be in prospect.

(i) The implication of the foregoing statement is that Britain's present constitution is unwritten. To what extent do you agree that Britain's constitution is unwritten, illustrating your answer by outlining the main sources of the constitution? *9*

(ii) What other features characterise Britain's constitution? *4*

(iii) In what ways would the introduction of a Bill of Rights and Duties impact on the present nature of Britain's constitution? *3*

(c) Successive Liberal and Labour governments have, since 1911, proposed a series of reforms to the House of Lords.

(i) Outline some of the criticisms that have, since the 1990s, typically been made of the House of Lords. *3*

(ii) The current Labour government's proposals for reforming the Lords are just one of several approaches to Lords reform that have, in recent years, been debated. Summarise these alternative approaches and briefly evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of both the current and alternative approaches. *8*

(50)

2 Public policy can be defined as a set of ideas and proposals for action, culminating in a government decision. To study policy is, therefore, to study how decisions are made.

- **Requirement for question 2**

(a) Outline the eight principal theoretical models that purport to explain the public policy decision-making process in western liberal democracies. *16*

(b) To what extent do any of the eight models outlined in (a) above inform us about how decisions are actually made? *4*

(20)

SECTION B (Answer two from three questions)

3 There have been a number of changes in public sector financial management since the reforms of the Thatcher government in 1979. These changes included the increasing devolution of financial management; and, since 1997, the gradual shift in central government financial control from cash accounting to accruals accounting, thus becoming consistent with *UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice* used for commercial enterprises.

- **Requirement for question 3**

(a) Briefly outline the key issues that need to be considered when designing devolved financial management systems. *7*

(b) Outline the key differences between cash accounting and accruals accounting. *4*

(c) Explain the three main ways in which the change to accruals accounting affected managers. *4*

(15)

4 During the 1980s and 1990s, there was a large rise in the number of Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), more often referred to as Quasi Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisations (QUANGOs), and other extra-governmental organisation. These were created as part of a restructuring and streamlining of government, to carry out the executive rather than the policymaking functions of government. They usually operate with a degree of freedom from their Whitehall departments.

- **Requirement for question 4**

(a) QUANGOs are typically classified into six different types. Name each type, giving an example of a UK QUANGO that falls into each classification. *6*

(b) Outline the criticisms that are typically levelled at QUANGO government. *9*

(15)

5 From the mid-1930s to the mid-1980s, the Labour Party was traditionalist about constitutional issues, seeing little need for reform. But on coming to power in 1997, New Labour adopted a number of major constitutional changes, moving with remarkable speed on some matters, but slowly on others.

- **Requirement for question 5**

(a) Outline any three major constitutional changes that New Labour has adopted since coming to power in 1997. *9*

(b) Explain the key factors that underpinned the Labour Party's attitude towards the need for constitutional change. *6*

(15)