

Coalition Update: 1-7 February

The House of Lords, Constituencies and Voting Reform

[Voting reform deadlock ends after House of Lords deal](#) (*Guardian*, 31 January)

Labour agrees to abandon filibustering campaign after climbdown over redrawing parliamentary constituencies

[House of Lords to clash again on constitutional reform](#) (*Guardian*, 5 February)

Lord Falconer indicates Labour's preparedness to hold up bill if ministers reject compromise

[Nick Clegg targeted as anti-AV campaign links him to broken promises](#) (*Guardian*, 5 February)

Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg taunted over pre-election description of alternative vote as a 'miserable little compromise'

DEFRA and the proposed forest sales

[Official: England's forest sell-off will cost more than it saves](#) (*Independent*, 2 February)

[Bagehot on the proposed forests sale](#) (*Economist*, 3 February)

"the public does not really trust the whole thrust of Mr Cameron's vision for a Big Society, in which a centralised state gives way to a patchwork of local community groups, charities and businesses."

[Coalition scraps plans for disposal of nature reserves](#) (*Telegraph*, 5 February)

DEFRA takes fright at the public response to proposed forest sales and drops plans to shift ownership of reserves to charities

Profiles: the Lib Dems

[Finding a higher level: Chris Huhne](#) (*TotalPolitics*)

[Coffee House interview: Julian Astle](#) (*Spectator Coffee House*, 3 February)

The Centre

[Laid-back David Cameron should tighten his grip](#) (*Telegraph*, 7 February)

The PM's style of management is leading the Government into unnecessary difficulties

The unhappy Tory backbenchers

[Tories fear 'betrayal' by Cameron over electoral reform](#) (*Independent*, 1 February)

Senior Conservative MPs fear that David Cameron is diluting their party's opposition to electoral reform in an attempt to boost Nick Clegg's chances of winning a Yes vote in the referendum due in May.

[**A line in the sand on Europe: Tory MPs get go-ahead to defy Strasbourg over prisoner votes**](#) (*Mail*, 2 February)

[**The Prime Minister and his band of unhappy Tories**](#) (*New Statesman*, 3 February)

Tim Montgomerie: If Cameron is to survive midterm unpopularity, he needs to do much more to raise his party's morale.

[**Tory ministers on charm offensive to prevent MP mutiny**](#) (*Times*, 5 February) **££**

"Tory ministers are being ordered to listen to their MPs more as David Cameron tries to prevent rising backbench discontent from turning into a mutiny. Amid fears that the Prime Minister has lost touch with his grass roots over issues such as the sell-off of forests, Downing Street has told ministers to leave their Whitehall desks and appear regularly before committees of Tory MPs... Mr Cameron's aides insist that he is aware of backbench grumblings, but is responding. He had dinner on Thursday in Downing Street with eight MPs, the latest in a series of sessions to reach out to backbenchers. He has also increased his casual availability to Tory MPs by making more visits to the tea room in the Commons." (Hat tip to *ConservativeHome*)

Banks and Bankers

[**Anger over Barclays' plans for Diamond's bonus**](#) (*Guardian*, 4 February)

After months of talking with the banks, the coalition is yet to announce a deal, codenamed Merlin, under which the industry would to agree lending targets of up to £190bn and show restraint on bonuses in return for less criticism from the government.

The Lib Dems, Policy and the Parliamentary Party

Mark Valladares explains how policy is made within the Lib Dems in a series of posts

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

Rebellions

[**Coalition Rebellions exceed Blair's whole first term**](#) (*New Statesman*, 4 February)

The coalition has now seen more backbench rebellions than Tony Blair saw in his entire first term. Lib Dems have rebelled more already than during whole of the last Parliament, but most rebels are Tories. This trend is unusual for a first-term government.