

Coalition Update: 18-24 January

Electoral pacts

[Tim Bale: Even Churchill considered an electoral pact with the Liberals in the 1950s](#) (*ConservativeHome*, 18 January)

Tim Bale discusses the history of the relationship between the Tories and Liberals: this is not the first time the Tories have considered greater cooperation.

[A dangerous liaison for Cameron – an emerging Lib Lab pact](#) (*Telegraph*, 17 January)

Article details growing number of contacts between Lib Dems and Labour.

[Lib Dem influence waxes and wanes](#) (*Guardian*, 19 January)

Interesting for the discussion about the links between the Lib Dems and Labour; and for the difficult role of Simon Hughes, deputy leader of the Lib Dems.

[Michael Gove urges voters to back Lib Dems to beat Labour](#) (*Telegraph*, 20 January)

Gove encourages Tory voters to engage in tactical voting in council elections.

[Liberal Democrats to fight next election as totally independent party](#) (*Guardian*, 20 January)

Article on the Lib Dems Executive Council's as-of-yet unpublished statement: a greater insistence on distinctiveness.

The Centre

[NHS cuts: Scale of shakeup took No 10 by surprise](#) (*Guardian*, 19 January)

Cameron orders a strengthening of his own policy unit so the centre is better equipped to challenge departmental plans in future.

Polling

[The LibDem Collapse, Fact or Fiction](#) (*Politicalbetting.com*, 19 January)

Jo Grimond, former head of polling at ICM, is critical of 'voting intentions'--voters will only know how they will vote when presented with options from the parties.

[What would happen in an electoral pact?](#) (*UK Polling Report*, 19 January)

Would supporters of the coalition parties vote tactically in favour of a 'coalition candidate'? Heavily laced with qualifications, but conservative voters are likely to switch votes to support a coalition candidate.

Local Government and Localism

[Eric Pickles blames councils for UK's budget deficit](#) (*Guardian*, 19 January)

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government says local councils must share the blame for the deficit; councils reply in turn.

[Big society plans raise concerns for parliamentary democracy](#) (*Guardian*, 21 January)

Gus O'Donnell asks the Permanent Secretary of DCLG to look into the impact of the localism bill on government accountability.

Communications

[This is embarrassing: I agree with Tom Baldwin](#) (*Telegraph*, 19 January)

Ed Miliband's head of communications sends letter to broadcasters asking them to stop using the term 'coalition' and use 'tory-led government'. Brogan: political labels carry meaning.

[After Coulson, Downing Street should make four strategic shifts in communications strategy](#) (*ConservativeHome*, 22 January)

Following Andy Coulson's departure from Downing Street, Tim Montgomerie suggests a number of changes, including greater contact with the parliamentary party and reversing the decision to limit the number of special advisers.

[What print journalists, broadcasters, commentators and bloggers want from Andy Coulson's successor](#) (*ConservativeHome*, 24 January)

Tim Montgomerie suggests what No 10's communications team needs to do: more expansive briefing; less silence; greater focus.

The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill and the House of Lords

[Labour 'heavies' run riot in the House of Lords](#) (*Telegraph*, 22 January)

The Telegraph argues the filibuster on the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill is being organised by newcomers from the House of Commons.

[Why are Labour Lords keeping their peers up late?](#) (*LSE blog* 18 January)

Ron Johnston explains.

Miscellaneous

[Chris Huhne: His modest mission: to save the world](#) (*Independent*, 23 January)

Interview with Chris Huhne, who asserts his pro-European credentials; reduction of carbon emissions; acceptance of nuclear power.