

Coalition Update: 28 June-4 July

The Civil Service

Watchdog to audit political appointments (*Guardian*, 28 June)

Sir David Normington, the civil service commissioner, is to audit appointments made since the election after allegations that the coalition has exploited loopholes that allow ministers to recruit people on short-term contracts without advertising first.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/jun/28/civil-service-political-appointments-audit>

In this era of capitulation, the log-rollers are rampant (*Guardian*, 28 June)

Simon Jenkins claims "Whitehall is no longer a partnership between ministers and officials", the result of "a decade of process".

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jun/28/defence-civil-service>

Policy Differences

Immigration review will examine controversial human rights law (*Telegraph*, 2 July)

Immigration has divided the Cabinet, with Nick Clegg and Michael Gove joining forces to block Home Office's plan for a cap on foreign students allowed to stay once studies are completed.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/8612917/Immigration-review-will-examine-controversial-human-rights-law.html>

Will David Cameron win the battle to control immigration? (*Telegraph*, 2 July)

Tim Montgomerie on coalition infighting on immigration and Tory backbench concern that Liam Fox and IDS are too focused on their departments and not pulling coalition toward their end of the political spectrum, as Lib Dem ministers are doing.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/conservative/8612889/Will-David-Cameron-win-the-battle-to-control-our-borders.html>

Demand to curb casino banking risks splitting the coalition (*Guardian*, 2 July)

Senior Lib Dems have called for ring-fenced retail banks. The issue has reportedly been "fudged" since the coalition's creation, but could lead to Lib Dems and Labour working together to achieve a shared goal.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/jul/02/demand-casino-banking-coalition>

Lords may ambush plans to limit benefits (*Independent*, 4 July)

Eric Pickles' warning that a benefit cap would increase homelessness has increased Lib Dem opposition to the proposal. Lib Dem peers could rebel on the issue.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/lords-may-ambush-plans-to-limit-benefits-2306259.html>

The role of the Manifestos in Coalition

Tory MPs voiced their scepticism about an elected second chamber... (*Conservativehome*, 28 June)

In the Commons debate on Lords reform, Tory MPs lined up to analyse the manifesto commitments on Lords reform, claiming that the party that was most lukewarm won the most votes at the general election and that this indicates the views of voters on the issue.

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/parliament/2011/06/tory-mps-voiced-their-sceptism-about-an-elected-second-chamber-during-yesterdays-debate-in-the-commo.html>

Married couples must be helped by tax system (*Telegraph*, 28 June)

Conservative MPs are to table an amendment to the Finance Bill to have marriage recognised in the tax systems. Lib Dems are set to oppose the measure, which is viewed by some as designed to keep the issue, a Tory manifesto commitment, on the coalition agenda.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/8602011/Married-couples-must-be-helped-by-tax-system.html>

Leadership relations with members

David Cameron and his party are on a collision course over Europe (*Telegraph*, 28 June)

Benedict Brogan discusses the differences between David Cameron and his backbenchers on the EU. A group of new MPs is working on a report to show how the EU is frustrating coalition policy

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/benedictbrogan/100094393/david-cameron-and-the-conservatives-are-on-a-C2%A0collision-course-over-europe/>

Kenneth Clarke faces twin-track assault on jail reform plans (*Guardian*, 28 June)

The Labour front bench is to work with rebellious Conservatives to attack government justice policy.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/jun/28/kenneth-clarke-jail-reform-plans>

Mutterings grow as David Cameron loses appetite for reforms (*Guardian*, 30 June)

Tory MPs are reportedly unhappy that David Cameron has gone from reform crazy to a position where he now seems to have ended his reform agenda for this Parliament.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/jun/30/mutterings-david-cameron-appetite-reforms>

The three MPs from the Tory margins at the centre of the Commons (*Conservativehome*, 30 June)

Paul Goodman discusses the role of the Tory backbench business committee members (all regular rebels) in what the Commons debates and how it expresses itself.

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/thetorydiary/2011/06/by-paul-goodman-when-jonathan-last-updated-his-list-of-the-most-rebellious-conservative-mps-philip-hollobone-came-in-first.html>

Lib Dems divided as former minister brands Inverclyde a humiliation (*Scotsman*, 2 July)

A senior Scots Lib Dem has claimed the poor showing in the Inverclyde by-election was a referendum on Nick Clegg, whereas a source close to the Lib Dem leader said it was the result of the Scottish party distancing itself from him.

<http://news.scotsman.com/politics/Lib-Dems-divided-as-former.6794654.jp>

The Coalition Agreement

Lib Dems to rebel on nuclear subsidy (*Guardian*, 1 July)

A group of Liberal Democrat MPs are gearing up to rebel next week against a section of the government's finance bill which they believe gives a subsidy to the nuclear sector; this is barred by the coalition agreement.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jul/01/lib-dem-rebel-nuclear-power-subsidy>

Labour and the Lib Dems

David Miliband tells Labour to focus on politics (*Epolitix*, 27 June)

David Miliband has called on his party to focus its fire on David Cameron and the Conservatives rather than Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats, as the latter were "smaller fry".

<http://www.epolitix.com/1832-blog/blog-post/newsarticle/-5ed082e3f0/>

Miscellaneous

Powerful stuff from Clegg at the LGA conference (*LibDemVoice*, 30 June)

Chris White mentions the belief that Lib Dem ministers are only tasked with announcing unpopular policies. At the LGA conference, however, Nick Clegg got to announce plans for the localisation of business rates.

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/chris-white-writes-lga-conference-clegg-24602.html>

Tory members vote for the most impressive and most disappointing Coalition policies (*Conservativehome*, 2 July)

A poll of Conservatives has rated the best and worst coalition policies. The green investment bank and increased international aid come bottom. Making work pay and the abolition of ID cards are the most popular.

<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/thetorydiary/2011/07/tory-members-vote-for-the-most-impressive-and-most-disappointing-coalition-policies.html>