

## **REVIEW OF UK GOVERNMENT UNION CAPABILITY: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### *Context*

The successful devolution of powers to legislatures and Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has taken place gradually over the last twenty years via a succession of Acts of Parliament, including most recently the Scotland Act 2016 and the Wales Act 2017. Over that time the UK Government has adapted to meet this changing constitutional landscape while maintaining its primary responsibility of being a Government serving the whole United Kingdom. However, as the United Kingdom leaves the European Union, it is timely for the UK Government to consider how through its institutional arrangements it meets the challenge of strengthening and sustaining the Union in the future.

### *Objective*

Within this context, the UK Government has asked Lord Dunlop to undertake a short, focused independent review to ensure that, within the context of the existing devolution settlements, we are working in the most effective way possible to realise fully all the benefits of being a United Kingdom. The review is forward-looking, and will not consider past decisions. The review will not consider the powers or responsibilities of the devolved administrations and legislatures. The review will consider and make recommendations on the following question:

To consider whether UK Government structures are configured in such a way as to strengthen the working of the Union, and to recommend changes where appropriate.

In examining the above terms of reference, the reviewer should take into account the following:

- The need to respect and support the current devolution settlements, including the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Acts, as well as the Belfast agreement and its successors.
- The importance of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland retaining their own Secretaries of State who are members of Cabinet and Territorial Offices that represent the interests of the devolved nations in Westminster; and
- That the question of the Barnett Formula and the Scottish and Welsh Governments' fiscal frameworks are out of scope for this review.

### *Process*

The review will be independent of government and supported by a small team of civil servants. It will report to the Prime Minister. The review will be expected to take evidence but there will be no formal written consultation.

### *Timing*

The review will begin in July and conclude in the Autumn through a report to the Prime Minister.