

# ENGLISH DEMOCRATS

*PRO PATRIA ANGLORUM*

QUIRES GREEN  
WILLINGALE  
ONGAR  
ESSEX  
CM5 0QP  
Tel: 01277 896000  
Fax: 01277 896050  
www.englishdemocrats.org

Our Ref: RT/37

Your Ref:

Date: 10/03/16

LGA Public Affairs Team  
Local Government House  
Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3HZ  
England

Dear Sir

**APPG for reform, decentralisation and devolution in the UK**  
**Better devolution for the whole UK enquiry**

As Chairman of the English Democrats I am writing to submit evidence to your enquiry. Here are some key facts about the English Democrats:-

The English Democrats launched in 2002 and are the only campaigning English nationalist Party. We campaign for a referendum for Independence for England; for St George's Day to be England's National holiday; for Jerusalem to be England's National Anthem; to leave the EU; for an end to mass immigration; for the Cross of St George to be flown on all public buildings in England; and we supported a YES vote for Scottish Independence.

The English Democrats are England's answer to the Scottish National Party and to Plaid Cymru. The English Democrats' greatest electoral successes to date include:- in the 2004 EU election we had 130,056 votes; winning the Directly Elected Executive Mayoralty of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council in 2009 and also the 2012 mayoralty referendum; in the 2009 EU election we gained 279,801 votes after a total

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EU campaign spend of less than £25,000; we won the 2012 referendum which gave Salford City an Elected Mayor; in 2012 we also saved all our deposits in the Police Commissioner elections and came second in South Yorkshire; and in the 2014 EU election we had 126,024 votes for a total campaign spend of about £40,000 (giving the English Democrats by far the most cost efficient electoral result of any serious Party in the UK!). In the 2015 General Election we had the 8<sup>th</sup> largest contingent of candidates in England.

We would be happy to give oral evidence to the enquiry.

### **OUR EVIDENCE**

In your Terms of Reference you have stated you want evidence on various defined areas:- 1) Devolved Nations; 2) Local Government; 3) Central Powers; and 4) Wider Constitutional Reform. The English Democrats on behalf of the Party itself and on behalf of the wider English nationalist movement would respond as follows:-

#### 1. Devolved Nations

‘Devolution within England’] cannot properly be described as “Devolution” at all by comparison to Scottish and Welsh national devolution. The only devolution that would be properly so called for England would be of an English Parliament, First Minister and Government with at least the same powers as the Scottish ones within a Federal UK.

It is the English Democrats opinion that the time for a Federal UK has already passed. For that to happen what should have happened in the first place when devolution occurred was that a coherent and fair national devolution for each of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland should have been set up with each assembly or parliament having the same powers and a defined relationship with central government, as per

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every proper Federal State in the world. The fact that this was not done and that England's just and fair interests have been consistently ignored and derided has led to mounting resentment in England.

It also would have been possible for the UK to have been turned into a Federal Regionalist State in conformity with the EU regionalist objectives but that would have required Scotland and Wales to have been regionalised and not for them to have national devolution. That window of opportunity has now firmly passed.

EVEL or English Votes for English Laws is a bogus, populist positioning policy which does not even properly answer the representational element of the wider English question.

The Conservative Government's proposals are in any case the weakest of all the proposals for English Votes for English Laws. They will certainly disappoint all those people in England who think that the political system should allow a proper and fair voice for English interests to be expressed. The EVEL proposals do not of course even touch the executive side of the question as there is no proposal to have either a First Minister or Government for England, nor does it touch the administrative side of the question as there is no proposal to have an English Civil Service and not even to have a Secretary of State for England and therefore there is no parity with these proposals with what has been created for Scotland and Wales.

## 2. Local Government

It is not part of England's tradition for legislative competence to be devolved from the National Government. However it is part of England's tradition for our local government structures to be as independent of central government as possible. It is partly the United Kingdom's increasing obsession with centralisation which

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has created the demand for Decentralisation. The English Democrats would like to see traditional local government structures re-empowered and there to be a substantial decentralisation of powers.

As the power to raise their own funds is an important part of the effectiveness and independence of governmental structures we would also support decentralisation of tax raising powers to enable local government to fund itself. Those aspects of so-called local government which are little more than local structures being deputised to do exactly what central government wants done should be dealt with by separate agencies rather than continuing with the pretence that they are genuinely part of local government.

The governance of Local government should also be made more democratically accountable with the universal implementation of Directly Elected Executive Mayors for all principal local authorities.

### 3. Central Powers

The role of Whitehall should be reduced and the role of the Houses of Parliament should be confined much more to those areas which under the current and evolving situation have not been devolved to Scotland.

### 4. Wider Constitutional Reform

#### Electoral System

Scotland's electoral system has shown that despite the whiff of gerrymandering that accompanied the way it was set up, it has enabled a diversity of political opinion to be expressed in the Scottish Parliament. It is therefore to be preferred to an electoral system, such as the current first past the post system for the House

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of Commons which gives a bogus cloak of democratic majority to a party voted for by only 26% of the electorate in the last election and, with one sole exception, almost wholly denied representation for the votes of nearly 4 million voters. Such an electoral system is not only unfair but it is undemocratic.

### House of Lords

The current composition of the House of Lords is completely unsatisfactory and too often appears to rest on cronyism, patronage and donations. Having moved from the original composition of mainly hereditary peers, there are only three options:- 1) Abolition of the House of Lords; 2) Reform to be a democratic UK Senate, as suggested by Lord Salisbury; or 3) A wholly elected Upper Chamber.

Those are the basic submissions of the English Democrats which we would be happy to expand upon in oral evidence if called.

Yours sincerely

Robin Tilbrook

Chairman

Tel: 01277 896000

Email: [robintilbrook@aol.com](mailto:robintilbrook@aol.com)