

Constitutional Update

Legislation

In the second year the pace of constitutional legislation has hardly slackened, with six constitutional bills coming before Parliament

- The **European Parliamentary Elections Bill** received the Royal Assent on January 14th 1999 after the Lords rejected it for an unprecedented sixth time, and the Government invoked the Parliament Acts for the first time since 1991.
- The **Greater London Authority Bill** and the **House of Lords Bill** have both gone through the Commons and are now before the Lords.

In addition three draft bills have been promised before the summer:

- Draft Bill on Cabinet System/Elected Mayors for Local Government
- Draft Bill on Freedom of Information
- Draft Bill on Controls on Party Funding.

Devolution

- In **Scotland** the four main parties and the Greens agreed voluntarily to implement **Lord Neill's** recommendations and limit their campaign spending for the Scottish Parliament elections to £1.5m. They will submit their accounts to independent inspection.
- The **Consultative Steering Group** (CSG) on the Scottish Parliament published its report in January 1999. The CSG included a range of politicians from all parties, academics, and representatives of civil society. Its remit was to:

Freedom of Information

- The Home Office has established an Advisory Group on Implementation of Freedom of Information, chaired by Minister of State Lord Williams of Mostyn. The terms of reference are:
 - ◊ to advise the Home Secretary on proposals for promoting cultural change in the public sector to foster a culture of openness
 - ◊ to assist in the development of training and education programmes for public servants to promote the introduction of the Act and cultural change.
- The Whitehall members of the Group are Carolyn Sinclair, Lee Hughes and Rowena Collins-Rice

1999 calendar year. Please fill in the enclosed order form, or contact Sara Northey on 0171 504 4977 for further details.

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