

# MPs Go Back to Their Constituencies

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There is a temptation for MPs to spend more and more time developing the effectiveness of their constituency role—and there is nothing Government would like better. The more time we spend updating our websites and replying to our constituents' emails, the less time we have to make a nuisance of ourselves in the House. (Sir George Young, former Shadow Leader of the House)<sup>1</sup>

The role of the MP in representing his constituency has been considered essential since medieval times, as it relates closely to Parliament's role in redressing grievances. Before mass enfranchisement, each MP represented an 'interest' often closely linked to the constituency. But Edmund Burke's emphasis on the individual MP as mediating the views of his constituents created a more complex theory of political representation. This was in turn superseded with the growth of mass parties that demanded loyalty from their elected representatives in Parliament. But there remains a continuing tension between 'trustee' and 'delegate' models of representation, although trustee notions are often confined to 'conscience' issues. The popular belief that an MP should exercise his mind independently on occasion is accepted and asserted by MPs themselves and is most often exerted in constituency work.

Two conventions exist at Westminster that bolster and define this role:

1. MPs should represent all their constituents, not just party supporters, those who voted for them, or those who assisted them financially or otherwise.
2. MPs should not purport to represent other constituencies.

The exact date by which these two conventions became accepted cannot be pinpointed, but they have reached their current delineation in the postwar period, during the growth in constituency casework.

Changes in working practices in the Commons, combined with more generous allowances and the widespread availability of IT, appear to have led to an increasing emphasis on constituency casework, rather than the representation of constituency issues. It can be difficult to separate cause from effect. However, the attention to this work results increasingly from the belief that it assists with securing re-election. Therefore, there may be a benefit in such activity for the incumbent MP over potential challengers, both for a party's nomination as candidate and in the actual election. This raises questions about the extent to which publicly provided resources for parliamentary work in the constituency are a form of 'election expense'. Election law attempts to provide a level playing field for all candidates, but trends in allowances for MPs are beginning to cause controversy, as assisting the cause of an incumbent. How far is it practicable to police the use of resources for casework? What is at issue is the extent to which parliaments can improve the capacity of their members in carrying out constituency duties but avoid the inappropriate use of public funds to influence the outcome of elections.

## Background

Before mass democracy in the late nineteenth century, MPs could exploit

parliamentary procedures to voice local grievances, but the way in which the executive gained control of most of the time available for parliamentary business in the early twentieth century considerably reduced the potential effectiveness of this option. Instead, critical views on public policy, especially those of government backbenchers, are expressed privately through party forums. This shift from representing the constituency on general issues of policy to representing the needs of individual constituents is well documented. In the words of S. E. Finer: 'the representatives have changed character from being primarily custodians of the interests of the locality as such to the role of playing nursemaid to individual constituents or constituencies'.<sup>2</sup> Finer drew attention to the nationalisation of political parties, which forced MPs to support national mandates rather than stand for local issues. At the same time, the growth of big government created a new market for assistance, as the ordinary constituent needed help to navigate the complexity of the welfare state. Even in the 1960s, MPs saw their role in redressing individual grievances as central and insisted that the new office of parliamentary ombudsman be an extension of, rather than an alternative to, their role, and that it could be accessed only via themselves. This considerably reduced the potential of the office in providing an all-purpose assistance with the complexities of the British administration.

Changes in the characteristics of MPs also had an important impact on the process of prioritising individual constituency work. Peter Riddell has documented the increasing importance of a political research background in achieving selection as an MP. The proportion of new MPs with backgrounds other than politics fell from 80 per cent to 41 per cent between 1951 and 1992.<sup>3</sup> The ranks of MPs are no longer drawn from the professional classes but increasingly from

public sector backgrounds with an intrinsic interest in fair and effective service delivery in the localities.

How far this ideology has taken root is evident. A survey after the 1997 election found that 86 per cent of new MPs thought being a good constituency member was the most important activity—and only 13 per cent thought checking the executive was of higher importance.<sup>4</sup> This is a trend encouraged by all major parties, which gain assiduous local representatives and divert the energies of full-time politicians away from policy development and disputes over the direction of the party. But the constituency role is accelerating in its development as a result of a number of separate new factors that have emerged in the last decade in British politics. This has major implications for Parliament and for politics.

## The growth in constituency work

The rapid growth in constituency case-work is a postwar phenomenon. In 1970 Barker and Rush found that 75 per cent of MPs received between 27 and 75 letters per week.<sup>5</sup> Around 10,000 letters a week came into the Commons in 1964 but by 1997 this had increased to 40,000. Norton and Wood cited a survey from the Letter Writing Bureau indicating that approximately 6 million letters were sent to MPs each year in 1986—half of these from constituents, representing more than 30 letters per day per MP, and ten times the equivalent in the 1950s.<sup>6</sup> The advent of email makes the volume of correspondence almost impossible to measure and may itself encourage a more professional marketing approach to constituency work.

By the end of the 1960s over 90 per cent of MPs held regular constituency surgeries. Constituency parties became more likely to ask candidates whether they would live in their constituency. By

1987 the majority of new MPs first returned at that election gave their address as in the constituency. Documentation is not confined to academic studies. The 1971 survey of MPs by the Review Body on Top Salaries found that the average backbencher spent approximately 11 hours a week outside the House on constituency business; by 1982 the average had increased to 16 hours. The influential generic job description for an MP contained in its 1996 report noted: 'work in the constituency has increased immensely over the last 20 years or so'. These observations were repeated in 2001 and in 2004.

Constituents proved adept at using this new service, which offered privileged access to officialdom. Examples were the 'hotline' developed for the use of MPs only in immigration appeals. This has been described as 'cognitive mobilisation'—the public at large were beginning to demonstrate a greater awareness of the possibility of challenging administrative decisions, due to the effects of mass public education and new forms of mass media. The growth of judicial review was another aspect of this trend.

The growth in constituency work has had a major effect on government activity. A Cabinet Office efficiency scrutiny suggested in 1990 that ministers answered 250,000 letters a year, mostly from MPs. The estimated cost of dealing with this correspondence was £17.5m—£70 a letter. The introduction of Next Steps executive agencies was meant to reduce this element of central government accountability, but this did not happen in practice. The privatisation of major utilities had made no difference to the overall workload of the MP, who became as effective in demanding redress from private companies as from nationalised industries. His role developed from holding central government to account to holding everyone to account. He became involved in everything in the locality, from neighbour disputes to

assisting schoolchildren with their essays.

But a staple area remains local council services. MPs have subverted the accountability role of local councillors by actively providing a complaints service for local council tax payers. Some of this development is to do with resources. MPs offer a full-time professional service in a way that most councillors cannot. More important is the local standing of the MP as the major political figure with a higher political profile than the council leader or mayor, and the increasing recognition that national politics determines local policies. According to Rick Rawlings, who has undertaken virtually the only in-depth analysis of a constituency case-load—letter by letter—virtually no member refused to act on issues because of ideological preferences. Finally, the increasing importance of national policies in determining local implementation is an important driver.

There are distinct benefits in the emphasis on constituency work. Not least there are policy information benefits. Ministers gain information about policy implementation and the state of unease in their party—the prime example being the poll tax, but also including fiascos such as the creation of the Child Support Agency. Constituents find it a rewarding service, since demand continues to rise. Rawlings's analysis of seven MPs' correspondence found that 3.6 per cent of letters produced changed decisions and a further 4.4 per cent resulted in requests being granted. However, the biggest benefit to constituents was actually getting a response from officialdom.<sup>7</sup> Rawlings judged that constituents obtained tangible benefit by virtue of MPs' intervention in just over 20 per cent of cases, but in terms of reassurance that decisions were correct the success rate was over 50 per cent. Members therefore benefit from ministerial letter writing; it clearly represents a cost effective use of their time, much more than tabling formal

parliamentary questions. This plays well in their constituencies, but other factors also lead MPs to fill their time with casework.

## Motivation

Donald Searing's classic study based on interviews in the 1970s found that MPs chose their roles, which he categorised as constituency members, policy advocates, ministerial aspirants and parliament men. He created a subcategory of constituency members—welfare officers and local promoters. He found that backbenchers chose roles as personal preferences, and cast doubt on electoral incentive as a reason for concentration on the constituency. A number of studies since the 1970s have come up with two factors, incumbency and the cohort effect, which seem to have some relationship with the amount of time individual MPs put into constituency work. But what still stands out is the difference in effort put into constituency work.

The incumbency argument is familiar. Full-time MPs need to concentrate on reselection, re-election and ministerial office to maintain their chosen career, so by nature they are more dependent than their predecessors on keeping good relations with the local party. The life cycle theory is plausible—a new MP naturally devotes more time to establishing himself in the constituency. Norton and Wood surveyed new Conservative MPs in 1983 and 1987 and found that they concentrated more on constituency work in the absence of sufficient ministerial positions for all new full-time MPs. Each new cohort of MPs increased the expectation of constituency activity. The significance of the birth of the SDP Alliance and its emphasis on local constituency work cannot be discounted, nor can the change in Labour party selection procedures requiring reselection for all MPs.

In effect, the growth in constituents' demands has coincided with a decline

in the two-party system, creating more competition. Further work by Pippa Norris, based on the British Candidate Survey, found that there was a relationship between objective measurement of the marginality of the seat and constituency service. This is another demonstration of the cohort effect—those entering Parliament in 1987 spent more time (27 hours) than those in 1983 (23 hours) on constituency casework. Norton and Wood warned of exaggerating the incumbency effect, putting it at no more than 1,500 votes. But circumstances are perhaps no longer normal since 1997 as party allegiance continues to weaken.

The other major factor behind the growth is the psychological reward of getting results through intervention. The day to day work in Parliament can offer a depressing contrast of ineffective debate. One of Norris's most significant findings was the differences in behaviour, pointing to subjective reasons for constituency work. Twenty per cent of MPs spent less than 15 hours a week on constituency service work, while a quarter spent 30 hours or more.<sup>8</sup> The type of constituency and level of deprivation appeared to have little effect.

## Discharging their roles

Rawlings found that MPs were acting as advocates rather than ombudsmen. His research illustrated the variety of approach in 1990—some took everything, some operated a filtering approach. Some constituents had active MPs, others did not, but they could not complain if their representative was not offering the type of service given by his next door neighbour. As Rawlings noted: 'A Member is free to raise any constituency case and equally possesses discretion to refuse a case which no court, tribunal or ombudsman can review'.

Constituents occasionally approach the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, citing failures by MPs to respond

effectively to their cases as a failure of their duties under the Code of Conduct for Members. So far, successive Commissioners have taken the line that they have no locus and that the remedy lies with the ballot box. But the Code for the Members of the Scottish Parliament does contain a specific requirement to be a good constituency member, thereby opening the door to complaints about the discharge of the constituency role. Its MSPs are required to:

Have a duty to be accessible to the people of the areas for which they have been elected to serve and to represent their interests conscientiously.

The Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner has had to deal with disputes between MSPs elected on the regional list and those elected for constituencies over 'poaching' or 'ambulance-chasing'—that is, taking up local issues without being the representative for that constituency. The first month of its existence saw a bitter dispute about the level of allowances for regional list members, indicating the importance placed from the start on constituency work as an effective means of securing re-election. The disquiet expressed by Labour members of the Welsh Assembly has led the Labour party in Wales to argue for a legislative ban on candidates standing both on the list and in a constituency.

There are indications that MPs are becoming more creative in ways of reaching constituents. The Liberal Democrat Mark Oaten attempted constituency surgeries on trains between his constituency and London in 1999. MPs are now more likely to operate street surgeries with local councillors, or rotate through a number of different towns/villages. Traditional surgeries, taking place on party headquarters, remain popular, but some MPs have abandoned surgeries altogether as not cost-effective, since they may attract the 'mad, bad and sad', who deter other clients. MPs have had to deal

with concerns about personal safety, following a fatal attack at a surgery in 2001. The MP John Spellar received some unwelcome publicity after deciding not to accept as clients anyone who was not enfranchised to vote for him, but some private surveys by MPs indicate that the type of people most helped by constituency casework were those least likely to vote. This research indicates how thinking about constituency work is becoming more focused on achieving effective outcomes.

What strain does this impose on the traditional role of MPs? Parliamentary reformers have expressed concern that the legislative and scrutiny role is being put under pressure. In general, MPs are more stressed, as they have more to do. The decline in private members' business in the last twenty years is evident, as members use Fridays for constituency surgeries. The practice of non-sitting Fridays developed as constituency surgeries drew members away from parliamentary business. The parliamentary week has been foreshortened further since 2001 to cope with the changing role following recommendations from the Modernisation Committee. Proposals from Robin Cook, when Leader of the House, to increase the size of select committees and therefore broaden participation did not achieve sufficient parliamentary support.

The creation of a parallel chamber in Westminster Hall was partly designed as a new forum for backbench and committee business, but it has not functioned as well as its designers hoped. MPs seem to prefer informal activity to formal debates. The clash of understanding of the role of an MP is epitomised in the intervention by the former Speaker in 1998 deploring the implications of the constituency weeks, developed by the Modernisation Committee, in order to allow backbenchers to work in their constituencies. Although in 1996 Ann Taylor, then Shadow Leader of the House, promised

a new emphasis on parliamentary scrutiny, in practice the Modernisation Committee has had little effect on longer term trends reducing the formal role of the backbencher in Parliament.

## New factors in play

Recent research into the role of constituency work has been undertaken by researchers at the University of Wales at Swansea and the Constitution Unit, University College London, as part of understanding the impact of devolution on Parliament. This has valuable evidence of new factors accelerating the focus on constituency work.<sup>9</sup> A series of interviews and surveys were carried out in 2000, 2002 and 2004. The focus of the research is on exploring the effect of devolution on the role of the MP, and the members of the new Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. Two significant trends are discernible:

1. Constituency work continues to increase, but individual MPs do not appear personally more overloaded. The 2004 survey found that MPs as a whole spent 14.7 hours per week on 'casework for individual constituents'. The importance of the work is highly rated, with 90 per cent considering it a very important part of the role in 2004—even 84 per cent of Conservative respondents. The 2000 survey recorded 41.3 per cent of respondents saying they worked between 71 and 90 hours a week, a figure that fell to 27 per cent in the 2002 survey. The hypothesis is that more staff resources are at the disposal of MPs, connected with the introduction of more generous allowances in 2001.
2. Devolution has produced a free market in constituency work. Research published in 2003 has examined the question of rivalry between the MSPs and AMs, who are elected under the Additional Member system which

creates a new type of representative—the regional member.<sup>10</sup> Rivalry also occurs between Scots and Welsh MPs and their MSP/AM counterparts. New MPs elected in 2001 displayed the 'cohort' effect in working to be the major local representative in those areas. The other side of the picture is that constituents themselves appear more assertive in relation to their rights and in devolved parts of the UK understand that they have a number of different representatives competing for their services. This puts traditional conventions under pressure.

There is a distinct party difference, with Conservative MPs receiving the least correspondence (including telephones and emails). Almost two-thirds of Labour MPs in England reported over 150 contacts a week, on a rising trend. In Scotland and Wales, contacts were declining. There appears to be a clear 'devolution' effect, illustrating that the role of the Scots and Welsh MP may be undergoing modification, as time is freed from the burden of the postbag. In England, however, constituency work is on the increase. A number of new factors in the last decade have driven this process:

- IT improvements allow MPs to cope with demand, so improving their capacity to canvass for new business. Emails and websites are the most obvious manifestation, but powerful new databases now assist constituency offices with tracking the casework. Interviews with members indicated that a number had databases shared with local MSPs/AMs and MEPs, which would generate letters based on a standard format, triggered automatically by length of wait. The development of IT services at the Commons itself enables more staff and MPs to work from constituency offices, rather than base their main resources at Westminster. IT encourages MPs to offer a

more consumer-led service by email and by online surgeries. Newsletters, annual reports and standard letters have become common methods of initiating contact with constituents. Email offers the potential of mass marketing systems, enabling not only one-off mass mailings but the development of more focused relationships with different segments of constituents who may have contacted members on popular issues. The availability of inexpensive databases in which to store constituents' profiles enables sophisticated cost-effective targeting to take place. There are specific exemptions from data protection legislation to allow MPs to share personal information for constituency duties.

- Long running discussions about the most appropriate manner by which to fund research and office assistance for MPs has resulted in changes in the financial allowances for MPs' office costs at Westminster, introduced in 2001. These have helped to increase the overall resources available to constituency offices. The system has been centralised, so that the Finance and Administration Office in the Commons is responsible for paying (but not employing) staff centrally, and MPs now claim central provision and maintenance of IT equipment. All but a small minority of MPs interviewed (those with very high immigration/asylum caseloads) were coping financially. The initiative has enabled employment of two to three staff in constituencies who can offer a full-time service—in effect a small business. Some constituency offices now open five or six days a week, all day.
- MPs are adopting a more free market approach to constituency work in relation to other tiers of representatives, though the Westminster convention of not taking on another MP's caseload holds firm. Members show almost no inhibition in taking on the role of the

local councillor, justifying this action by helping to build a public profile locally. The trend is particularly marked where an opposing party is in control of a local council.

- MPs have a growing belief in the incumbency effect, particularly since 1997, which is linked to a decline in the two-party system. The Liberal Democrats won 46 seats in 1997 compared to 22 in 1992, when the party actually had a higher proportion of the vote. A core belief of the party is the value of pavement politics in retaining seats won in such circumstances. Labour MPs interviewed who were first elected in 1997 and who had subsequently retained their seats in 2001 demonstrated similar beliefs in the local constituency presence. Those who worked hard would retain previously safe Conservative seats. The evidence is not conclusive, but in this context mythology is much more important than reality in influencing behaviour.
- Parties have redoubled their efforts to encourage a concentration on constituency work. In 1997 a contract was distributed to new Labour MPs, with ideas for campaigning within constituencies and setting targets for voter contacts, so that each MP was expected to contact 100 voters a week. In return for this level of activity, the seat would be given 'key seat' status at the next election. Conservatives have similarly made attempts to centralise their party machinery and highlight poorly performing MPs, as part of the development of the permanent election campaign.
- Parliamentary activity has become less important to backbench MPs since the landslide of 1997. The 1992 Parliament held opportunities for parliamentary ambush, and intrigue, as witnessed by the long, drawn out debates on the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. New Labour has offered

nothing comparable, despite the attractions for some of select committees and all-party groups. MPs are not always needed even as lobby fodder, and by no means all have a place on a select committee. Although controversy since the Iraq war has revealed more divisions within New Labour than were previously visible, there remain only a small minority of votes where the outcome is in doubt. Moreover, rebels as well as conformists need and want to work at their constituency base.

## Effects on Westminster and theories of representation

It is striking that the new types of member created following devolution have had a minimal impact on prevailing norms of constituency representation. There was virtually no debate during the passage of the devolution legislation about the role of regional members of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. In the absence of any philosophy, list members have sought to replicate the work of constituency members. A major factor prompting this behaviour has been the potential electoral reward. Through the accident of electoral geography in Scotland and Wales, most constituency members have been Labour and most list representatives are members of other parties that have been seeking constituency bases. So far, research suggests that official guidance on multilevel democracy has not been effective.<sup>11</sup> There are growing tensions about the role of the regional list member, documented in evidence to the Richard Commission on the powers and the electoral arrangements of the National Assembly for Wales and in the recent report from the Scottish Affairs Committee.

There is increasing unease about the advantages to incumbent MPs of their allowances for constituency work—an ill-defined term. It is not easy to distin-

guish between assistance for casework and party campaigning, and Westminster authorities are well aware of this. This issue continues to generate acute tensions in the Scottish Parliament. Where there is more than one list MSP from the same party in a region, the MSPs receive a lower level of allowance to reflect the absence of a constituency role. Their opponents continue to complain that the allowances received are used for electioneering purposes. In respect of Westminster, the Electoral Commission has begun to receive complaints that incumbent MPs are benefiting from parliamentary allowances, which ought to fall within the definition of electoral expenses. The services provided by the UK Parliament include advice work from the library in relation to requests from constituents, and free post facilities for responding to communications from constituents, as well as IT facilities and incidental expenses provision for office and communication needs. These services are not available to candidates for Parliament. Following dissolution there are strict impartiality requirements, ensuring that former MPs cannot use parliamentary facilities during the election campaign. This becomes more difficult when IT is involved.

It has become common practice for members at Westminster to issue annual reports on their activities, funded from parliamentary allowances (the incidental expenses provision) designed to fund 'communications', a definition that includes funding postage from the constituency, telephone costs, printing newsletters and establishing websites. Guidance from the parliamentary authorities stresses that newsletters amounting to fundraising or campaigning on behalf of a political party cannot be so funded. But there is a fine line between informing and persuading constituents and a lack of clarity relating to the policing of that line. Allegations of misuse of parliamentary allowances continue to be a major source



of complaints to the Parliamentary Standards Commissioner. The greatly varying amounts claimed for free postage by individual MPs became public when details of individual members' allowances were placed on the parliamentary internet in October 2004. This indicates that there are very different patterns of behaviour among members in approaching constituents. Unlike in New Zealand and Canada, there is no free post for constituents wishing to contact their members or ministers.

The latest report from the Modernisation Committee in 2004 on the interface between public and Parliament illustrates the complexity of this issue.<sup>12</sup> It reports demand from MPs for an increase in allowances to help them to explain their work in regular newsletters and for a relaxation of the rules on prepaid envelopes for MPs' correspondence, which may not be used for unsolicited mailings. The report comments:

The prohibition on using the House's postal services for political campaigning, fundraising or business correspondence is entirely proper. Any changes to the rules should be aimed at improving clarity and also, where appropriate, opportunities for Members to communicate to constituents matters relating to the business of the House, with no relaxation of the rules prohibiting party-political content. It is essential that facilities provided to Members to communicate with their constituents should not be available for use in a way which would tend to promote the interests of the incumbent MP at election time.

But it offered no mechanism to ensure that this distinction could be made in practice. A questionnaire sponsored by the Committee indicated demand for larger allowances, and interest in using newsletters and annual reports to communicate with constituents. These are growing pressures, which may need careful consideration by the Electoral Commission and the parliamentary authorities. IT in particular drives change and the availability of software for

database management means that variety in approach to the constituency role is likely to diminish as the service becomes more professionalised. New services, partially funded by the Commons, offer training to constituency staff in the handling of their mail. Correspondence by emails and blogging initiatives by MPs affects the no-poaching convention enforced at Westminster, given evidence that large proportions of email received originate from outside the constituency. To ensure equity of treatment, MPs need to ensure that communications via email do not get privileged treatment.

The majority of backbenchers are unlikely to restructure their workload to engage in formal methods of parliamentary scrutiny, whatever the hopes of parliamentary reformers. Although the imbalance between parties since 1997 has accelerated the trend towards constituency work, a narrow majority next time round is unlikely to reverse the trend. The pressures to focus on local issues are too strong the other way. The advantage of incumbency in US Congressional elections is well documented. Reformers interested in improving the parliamentary mechanisms available to backbenchers need to be aware of the pull of informal methods such as correspondence with ministers. Formal debates in chambers look increasingly irrelevant to both constituent and MP; committee work that can offer some local payback may be the only solution.

## Notes

- 1 G. Young, 'E-Politics is part of a total package', in S. Coleman, *Democracy Online: What Do We Want From MPs' Websites?*, Hansard Society, 2001.
- 2 S. E. Finer, 'The contemporary context of representation', in Vernon Bogdanor, ed., *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies*, Gower, 1985, p. 289.

- 3 P. Riddell, *Honest Opportunism: Rise of the Career Politician*, Hamish Hamilton, 1993, p. 22.
- 4 P. Norton and A. Mitchell, 'Meet the new breed', *House Magazine*, 13 October 1997.
- 5 A. Barker and M. Rush, *The Member of Parliament and his Information*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1971, Table 15.
- 6 P. Norton and David M. Wood, *Back from Westminster: British Members of Parliament and Their Constituencies*, University Press of Kentucky, 1993, p. 43.
- 7 R. Rawlings 'The MPs complaint service', *Modern Law Review*, vol. 53, no. 1, 1 January 1990, Table 4.
- 8 See P. Norris, 'The puzzle of constituency service', in *Journal of Legislative Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, summer 1997, pp. 29–34.
- 9 This research was funded jointly by the Leverhulme 'Nations and Regions' Programme and the ESRC's Devolution and Constitutional Change Programme.
- 10 J. Bradbury, O. Gay, R. Hazell and J. Mitchell, *Local Representation in a Devolved Scotland and Wales: Guidance for Constituency and Regional Members. Lessons from the First Term*, ESRC Devolution Policy paper, 2003.
- 11 J. Bradbury et al., Evidence to the Richard Commission 2004, in *Report of the Richard Commission*, Spring 2004.
- 12 Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons, *Connecting Parliament with the Public*, First Report of Session 2003–04, HC 368.