How the UK Coalition Government Works

Darryl Howe

A briefing for High Commissions

12 July 2011

Academy for Parliamentary & Policy Studies

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First Past the Post

Thatcher's 1983 Majority

144 (359 seats)

Blair's 1997 Majority

179 (418 seats)

General Election 2010

- Brown

255 MP's elected

71 short of a majority

- Cameron

305 MP's elected

21 short of a majority

Civil Service Preparation

- Sir Andrew Turnbull

- Foresight

- Sir Gus O'Donnell

- Detailed planning
- New Zealand style Cabinet Handbook

Policy Agreement

- Lessons from Scotland and Wales – need policy programme
- Negotiating teams thrash out 401 policy commitments in 31 policy areas
- *'We are agreed that the most urgent task facing this coalition is to tackle our record debts, because without sound finances, none of our ambitions will be deliverable.'*

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Some difficulties

Tuition Fees

Health & Social Care Bill

Ministers and Ministries

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Cable, Huhne, Moore

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Making it work – official machinery

Cabinet Committee meetings

Green papers for new policy

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Making it work – informal process

Westminster wobbles

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Confidence of the House of Commons is what counts.....

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