

Westminster launch pilot website for Public consultations

✘ The Coalition Government has this week launched the first stage of plans to give members of the public the right to comment on every aspect of new legislation, in a step towards 'putting people at the heart of the legislative process'

Through a [new pilot public reading stage](#), members of the public will be able to comment on each clause of the Protection of Freedoms Bill, which was published last week.

This builds on the unprecedented public involvement in generating the ideas contained in the Bill.

The Prime Minister said:

"Right now a tiny percentage of the population write legislation that will apply to one hundred percent of the population.

"This makes our laws poorer because it shuts out countless people across the country whose expertise could help.

"And it makes our politics poorer because it increases the sense that Parliament is somehow separate from the people rather than subservient to them.

"Our new Public Reading Stage will improve the level of debate and scrutiny of Bills by giving everyone the opportunity to go online and offer their views on any new legislation. That will mean better laws – and more trust in our politics."

The Deputy Prime Minister said:

“The Freedom Bill is not just about protecting people from the State, it is about giving people power over the State.

“Giving the Bill a public reading stage is an important step forward in our transformation from a closed political system to an open one.”

This pilot project represents the first step towards meeting the Coalition’s commitment to introduce a public reading stage for all Bills, allowing the Government to test the technology and ensure the system works well.

People can leave their comments on all aspects of the Bill by visiting an easily accessible website – www.publicreadingstage.cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

The comments will then be collated by the Government and presented to the Public Bill Committee, a cross-party House of Commons Committee that will scrutinise the Bill.

The Government wants the MPs on the Committee to use the public’s views to inform this scrutiny, putting the ideas, thoughts and concerns of ordinary people at the heart of the legislative process.

The Government believes that traditional consultations on new legislation have been too narrow in focus, often limited to invited experts and specialists, and wants to open up the parliamentary process to the widest possible audience.