

EASTR Leuven, 2009

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UK

STR, state and region

UK context

- Recession
- Public spending cuts
- Housing market failure
- 2010 election – breakdown of consensus
- Uncertain regional and local governance
- Climate change, infrastructure

Current regional governance

- Scotland, Wales, N.Ireland
- English regional offices (9) and STRs
- RDAs
- Regional boards of local councillors
- Regional strategies – economy, planning, etc.
- Investment plans
- Local and multi-area agreements

Scenario 1

- Current (Labour) government wins election
- Continuing public investment –
 - housing, transport, jobs, skills, etc.
- Spending cuts when growth returns
- Retain current regional structure/ roles

Scenario 2

- Conservative government, or alliance
- Early spending cuts
- 'Smaller government'
- c.30% cut in central civil service
- Regions 'swept away'
- Reduction in government agencies
- Emphasis on local government
- Euroscepticism; possible Lisbon referendum

Scenario 3

- Minority government, or coalition
- Uncharted territory

Strategic issues

- Recession: V,W,VW or L?
- Unemployment 'tail'
- Continuing crisis in housing markets
- Uncertain infrastructure investment
- Continuing absence of stable, constitutional basis for devolution and subsidiarity
- Mixed/ unstable 1/2/3 tier local government

Future role for STR?

- Managing change/ transition
- Managing central/ local contracts
- 'Bridge-builder' between localities
- Managing 'central' functions
- None?