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1. The constitution is not a policy area in the conventional sense of the term in the way that, for example, transport or schools are. It is the overall system within which political institutions operate. In this sense, the executive derives its authority from, and is subject to, the constitution, rather than the constitution being something it is responsible for managing.
2. The position in the UK, however, differs from that of many other democracies in that it lacks a specific constitutional text possessing special legal status. It is in this sense more possible for the UK executive to bring about constitutional change than its counterparts in other territories.
3. It can do so through using its ability to determine the legislative programme of Parliament. The executive can also issue documents, which may or may not have a statutory basis – such as the *Ministerial Code*, *The Cabinet Manual*, and the *Civil Service Code* – which help to determine how the constitution operates, or at least how it is perceived.
4. According to conventional understandings, the Cabinet is the supreme body within the executive. It has ultimate responsibility for constitutional matters. Decisions of major constitutional significance should – in theory at least – be considered collectively by the Cabinet.
5. Within the Cabinet, the Prime Minister – supported by the Cabinet Secretary – has a special constitutional role. They are responsible, for instance, for issuing editions of the *Ministerial Code*, and for enforcing the stipulations set out in this document.
6. Other Cabinet members and their departments may at times play an important role in constitutional affairs. They can include, at different times, the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office, and the minister and department with responsibility for devolution matters. Ministers may be tasked specifically with a constitutional brief, and perhaps be based in the Cabinet Office.
7. But overall responsibility for the constitution is broader than any one minister or even Prime Minister. For this reason, ideally, this issue should be addressed collectively, through Cabinet and its committees.

6 November 2024