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Corporate plan This five-year Corporate Plan , for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27,  
replaces and develops our interim plan put in place after the December 2019 UK  
general election. We also have a Corporate Plan for Wales , covering our activities  
in Wales for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27. We have published an interim corporate  
plan covering 2020 - 2025. This is required by legislation following the 2019 general  
election. The plan covers our early priorities and how we plan to fulfil our  
responsibilities, particularly in the first year. A full five year plan will be  
published later this year. Our vision and goals Our vision is to be a world-class  
public sector organisation — innovative, delivering great value and getting right  
what matters most to voters and legislators. We plan to achieve this vision through a  
five-year work programme with four goals. Goal 1 To enable the continued delivery of  
free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and  
addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and  
accessible Goal 2 To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of  
regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding  
amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches Goal 3 To be an independent  
and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the  
transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to  
the modern, digital age Goal 4 To provide value for money, making best use of our  
resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to  
voters. This goal underpins and supports all of our work The changing context The  
period since the last corporate plan was published has seen significant change. The  
impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is only beginning to be felt, including the  
postponement of the polls scheduled for May 2020. A welcome step, but one which  
presents a big challenge to running the May 2021 polls. Elections continue to be  
well-run, despite the demands that unscheduled polls place on electoral  
administrators. Public satisfaction with the process of registering to vote, and  
voting, continues to be high. Our regulation of political finance has continued to  
prove its worth. But our system is showing strain. There is significant pressure on  
local authorities' resources and capacity. For the public, the system depends on  
trust, which can be lost quickly if doubt begins to set in. While our research with  
the public shows that the majority of people were confident the May 2019 elections  
were well run, and most voters were satisfied with the voting process, overall levels  
of voter confidence in the running of the May local and European Parliamentary  
Election were lower than at previous polls. Over the next five years, investing in  
reforms to support the delivery of well-run elections, the effectiveness and  
transparency of campaigning, and the bolstering of voter confidence, will be  
critical. Outdated electoral law is one of the biggest challenge we face. From an  
outdated registration system in need of modernisation, to large volumes of  
legislation that electoral administrators need to refer to when running multiple  
elections. Existing proposals from the UK's Law Commissions have provided a strong  
basis for further work, and we continue to call on the UK's governments to take these  
forward. The nature of political campaigning continues to change. Digital advertising  
spend is increasing. Regulation, and the law, needs to keep up with these advances.  
As campaigning changes, we need to ensure that we have the right powers and tools to

effectively regulate political finance. We are working hard to encourage compliance with all those concerned. None of these issues are new, but they are increasing in risk and urgency. Our plan outlines how we want to play a part in addressing these challenges. We also plan to work with all UK governments to help them take forward their own reform plans. Our goals and priorities over the next five years

**Goal 1** This goal captures our central role in overseeing the delivery of elections and referendums across the UK's nations. We support electoral administrators, candidates and parties across the UK by providing guidance and tailored advice, as well as information for voters on registration and voting. There are 23 scheduled electoral events during the period of this corporate plan. In the lead up to those events, we will invest in supporting electoral administrators, candidates and parties across the UK. In addition, we will ensure we are fully prepared to respond to any unscheduled electoral events during the period of this plan. The UK Government announced on 12 March 2020 that the elections due to take place in May 2020 would be postponed until May 2021. While this welcome decision means we are not now facing the delivery of polls in an exceptionally challenging environment in May 2020, it does mean that the elections to be held in May 2021 will be more than previously expected. Events are now scheduled to take place across the whole of Great Britain, and with more significant combinations of polls. We are already working to help the electoral community understand the implications of the postponement and to put in place arrangements to support the effective delivery of these polls, and this will continue throughout 2020-21.

**Delivering well-run electoral events** During the period covered by this corporate plan, we'll support the delivery of 23 scheduled elections. In the run up to these elections, we'll continue to support local authorities, candidates and agents. We're proposing that we invest in an enhanced guidance support service. This means we could offer more advice, tools and resources. We'll also be moving more guidance to a modern and accessible format. We'll also work with partners to improve accessibility of elections, so that everyone has equal access to election information and processes.

**Voter registration campaigns** We'll run voter registration campaigns ahead of all major polls, raising awareness of the need to register amongst all eligible voters, but targeting under registered groups in particular. **Supporting the UK's governments' annual canvass reforms in Great Britain** We'll provide advice, guidance and resource materials for Electoral Registration Officers to support them with implementing these changes effectively. We will also work to support the 2021 canvass in Northern Ireland, including running a public awareness campaign to highlight what people need to do to ensure they are registered to vote.

**Increasing resilience in local electoral services** We'll take forward work on a strategy to support increased resilience in the delivery of local electoral services. We'll work with key partners in the electoral community to explore initiatives, such as an induction and mentoring programme for new Returning Officers, and an electoral services toolkit.

**New performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs)** We'll publish new performance standards to be used by us and EROs to understand and improve their performance, ensuring that registers are as accurate and complete as possible and that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so.

**Franchise changes** We will respond to and engage with the Scottish and Welsh governments' policy and legislative agendas for changes to the franchise to ensure they work for the public and EROs. We'll also invest in campaigns to raise public awareness of these changes.

**Electoral fraud work** We'll continue to include close engagement with the police and with local authorities. We'll be supported by public-facing activity such as our 'Your Vote is Yours Alone' campaign. What impacts and

benefits will this achieve? This work will enable us to deliver enhanced support for local authorities in the delivery of electoral services, and improve engagement with key partners in the electoral community, such as Solace and the Association of s (AEA). This will contribute to the provision of high quality services for voters and the delivery of well-run elections and registration systems. Our work will help to ensure that the results of elections will be increasingly trusted and accepted and the number of successful legal challenges will be as close to zero as possible. Goal 2 This goal captures our regulatory role, and is vital to ensuring the transparency which sits at the heart of any healthy democracy. Our work in this area is already wide-ranging, and increasingly proactive, securing compliance by supporting parties and campaigners, by real-time intervention and – when needed – by enforcement action.

**Ensuring transparency** We maintain published online political parties registers, giving confidence that only parties that meet the legal registration tests can appear on ballot papers. We also maintain a register of campaigners which spend substantial sums campaigning in elections. We deliver transparency of UK political finance by publishing details of donations and loans, annual accounts from registered parties, and campaign spending, which parties and others are required to report to us. We provide high quality advice and guidance to support parties, candidates and campaigners in complying with the rules. And we take action, where appropriate imposing sanctions, when the rules are broken, in accordance with the Commission's statutory Enforcement Policy. We believe it is far better to work to ensure compliance before an electoral event rather than have to take enforcement action afterwards. So we propose to invest in supporting compliance through a user-friendly online tool and a more responsive regulatory service.

**Continue to maintain the registers of political parties and campaigners** This ensures voters have clarity about registered parties and campaigners on the ballot paper. It includes completing a review of registered descriptions to make sure only those meeting the legal tests are included, and looking at how the constitutions and financial schemes of parties are formulated.

**Publishing financial data from parties and campaigners** We'll continue to promote transparency of political finance by publishing financial data from parties and campaigners, including that related to elections. Alongside this, we will deliver a new Political Finance Online system to support parties and campaigners to deliver their financial returns efficiently.

**Providing timely and high quality advice** To promote high rates of compliance with the rules, and thus transparency for voters, we will continue to provide timely and high quality advice and guidance to parties and campaigners to support them in meeting their legal requirements. This will include publishing guidance for the major elections in 2021, reflecting the impacts of the complex combination of polls, as appropriate, and developing codes of practice to underpin the law on reporting election spending.

**Working with parties and campaigners**, we will develop a new strategic framework to ensure effective and impactful proactive support.

**Enforcing political finance rules** We will deliver effective enforcement of the political finance rules, ensuring voters, parties and campaigners have confidence that the rules are enforced proportionately and with impact, within our current powers. We will continue to publish the outcome of each investigation, including in full reports where that is warranted, so voters, parties and campaigners can see the way we act to enforce the rules. To deter people from committing offences, and to make sure we can respond proportionally if they do, we will continue to build the capacity to prosecute suspected offences. We will consult on the way we approach the use of prosecutions.

**Responding to the changing environment** We will respond to the changing environment as more money is spent on

digital campaigning by responding to and engaging with government policy and legislative agendas for political finance to ensure they increase transparency for the public and are workable for campaigners. We will strengthen our engagement with social media companies and other providers of digital advertising to ensure their services and policies support transparency for election and referendum campaign activity. Policy development grants We will administer the policy development grants scheme and ensure it operates effectively by making timely recommendations to the UK Government for any necessary changes. What impacts and benefits will we achieve? This work will provide a faster and more responsive engagement with stakeholders, and guidance that is increasingly forward looking and gets ahead of potential regulatory issues. We should achieve a deeper and wider understanding of the campaign finance laws amongst parties and campaigners, leading to higher compliance rates. We will deliver an expanded range of tools that directly support parties and campaigners and are flexible enough to work for different structures and sizes, and that support targeted areas of the campaign finance rules, driven by strategic intelligence and horizon scanning. Together, this should result in improvement in the quality and reliability of the financial data parties and campaigners provide and we publish. The public will see and can have confidence that the spending and funding of political parties and candidates at UK elections is and transparent, and that we will take proportionate action if anyone breaks the rules on campaign funding. Goal 3 This goal captures our role in guiding the sector through the challenges it faces. We will provide the evidence, analysis and insight needed by us and others working in the field, to identify and address the most important issues facing the UK's democratic system. We will also monitor changes to the system of electoral registration and use post-election opinion surveys and our annual UK-wide survey to monitor the public's view on electoral issues and their experiences when taking part in elections. This data informs our decisions and policy recommendations, helps us to influence developments in legislation, policy and practice, and supports us in ensuring we are getting right what matters most to voters. We will continue to undertake research and report on the accuracy and completeness of the UK's electoral registers. We have a statutory duty to report on elections and referendums and keep electoral law under review. We will also continue to scrutinise new electoral legislation and provide expert briefings to governments and legislatures on legislative proposals. Voter confidence in our electoral system is crucial, and hinges on belief in the information offered. So we propose to invest in building voter awareness and education with a particular focus on digital campaigning. Providing expert advice and support to political parties, campaigners, governments and the public We will provide expert advice to these groups to inform policy change, educate and inform the public and promote partnership working across the electoral sector. This will include public relations and public affairs support for the Government's political finance policies and electoral law reform, a press office function to manage media and public enquiries and the provision of expert advice and evidence to inform policy consultations and reviews. Reporting on elections We will continue to report on the administration of elections to ensure we utilise learning to improve the delivery of future events. We will continue to promote and build support for changes to our democratic processes through dedicated campaigns and collaborative working with key partners and stakeholders. We will work with partners to consider options for improving the accessibility of elections and the modernisation of registration through the better use of existing public data records. Developing our evidence base We will develop our evidence base to enable greater understanding of the electoral

environment, emerging issues, risks and opportunities that could affect our work in the medium to long term, and enable us to plan accordingly. We will gather data and information after elections, including on public attitudes as well as the experiences of electoral administrators and candidates, to deepen our understanding of the issues faced by our customers including the public and local authorities. Increasing our public awareness activity We will enhance our public awareness activity to help voters understand the rules and systems that operate around elections and referendums, and their abilities to raise concerns and get involved. This will include activity around elections, related to the digital campaigning techniques increasingly used to reach voters, and the production of longer-term education materials to be used in formal and informal settings. of our information Promoting transparency is one of our corporate values and we will look to improve the accessibility of our information to partners and the public by developing our new corporate website further. We'll also be updating and revising the research content available. This will include a project to use open data and digital tools to make them accessible to all. Electoral fraud research We will proceed with our research and data analysis of cases of electoral fraud to identify any changes that could to help tackle the issue, and to support engagement with the UK's governments and their legislative agendas, such as the UK Government's proposal to introduce voter identity across Great Britain. A full corporate plan Through the development of our full corporate plan, and in consultation with our stakeholders, we will develop a new work programme to cover the next five year period. This will seek to make the greatest possible contribution to helping the sector to identify and plan for the most significant opportunities and challenges it faces. What impacts and benefits will we achieve? Our expert evidence and views are referenced in public debate about our democratic system and processes, and government proposals reflect our priorities and recommendations for change. Goal 4 As a body directly accountable to Parliament, we are subject to the same expectations of Parliament for regularity, propriety and value for money as other public bodies. Meeting or exceeding these standards is integral to the way we manage the day-to-day. Our financial accountability to Parliament is exercised through the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, a House of Commons committee, chaired by the Speaker and comprising ministers serving ex-officio and back-benchers appointed by the Speaker. Key to our success over the next five years and beyond is ensuring we have the right resources in place to support the delivery of this plan, including the initial need for resilience to ensure we are able to respond appropriately to the COVID-19 pandemic. This goal provides a focus to activities that support the organisation and ensure we have the appropriate skilled people and systems, that the delivery of services is efficient, effective and economical, and that we invest in modernising our infrastructure and systems to deliver consistent and improving value for money. This includes providing consistently high quality human resources, finance, planning, legal, support and information and communication technology (ICT) functions. People strategy We will implement our new 'people strategy' to promote a culture where staff teams are best able to perform their roles effectively. Digital working improvements We will continue to work on our 'ways of working' project to deliver digitally enabled business change to reflect the expectations of a modern employer, and ensure ICT can support those changes. Planned new investment in line-of-business systems over the coming years include a new regulatory case management system to support moving to undertake prosecutions, a replacement client case management system to track public and stakeholder contact, and post-poll reporting tools. Tracking corporate

performance We have successfully implemented a new corporate planning and performance system that enables the organisation to have a single, integrated picture of strategic and operational business activity, project delivery, risk and performance. This now enables us to focus on developing improved capability and understanding of the delivery of our strategic goals and the impact we are delivering for our customers. Accountability in Scotland and Wales We will continue to work with the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales to implement our new accountability arrangements, including a new funding formula and business plans for Scotland and Wales. Legal services Our ability to meet the needs of voters, legislatures, political parties and all of our other stakeholders is indirectly reliant on us having a specialist legal service. We will review and refresh how we deliver legal services that effectively and efficiently meet the changing and increasing requirements on us, and reduce use of expensive outside expertise. This initiative will establish a more stable core base of lawyers in re-orientated working arrangements that are underpinned by strong quality management processes and case management systems. Quality management We will embed quality management processes across all our services and functions, building on the sound practice in place in our regulatory teams. This will drive the development of our systems and processes and embed quality and continuous improvement in our culture. What impacts and benefits will we achieve? Improving our planning and performance reporting will enable improved monitoring and management across all our goals, thereby driving improved impact on the things that matter most directly to electors. Our 'ways of working' project combines real technological improvements and changes in working practices and conditions. We expect this to lead to real improvements in productivity through improved across-team working and greater flexibility. Our 'people strategy' is designed to ensure we have the engaged and empowered staff to deliver our ambitious agenda. We aim to see this reflected in higher staff engagement scores and higher staff retention rates. The real impact of these changes, however, will be felt in the performance and impact measures in this and other goals as we translate these internal goals into improved delivery. Read the corporate plan in full Corporate Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25