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Committee Chair First published: 8 July 2022 Last updated: 11 July 2022 Meeting

summary Date: Wednesday 18 May 2022 Time: 9:30am to 1:00pm Location: In person and by

video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 22 June 2022 Who was at

the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex

Attwood Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Stephen Gilbert Alasdair Morgan Joan

Walley Katy Radford In attendance: Shaun McNally, Chief Executive Craig Westwood,

Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and

Corporate Services Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance

Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Binnie Goh, General Counsel Zena Khan, Senior

Adviser, Governance Lilly Malik, Legal Officer [meeting support, first part of

meeting] Hannah Kavanagh, Legal Officer [all items, meeting support] Andy O'Neill,

Head, Electoral Commission, Scotland [item 6] Cahir Hughes, Head, Electoral

Commission, Northern Ireland [item 6] Rhydian Thomas, Head, Electoral Commission,

Wales [item 6] Phil Thompson, Head, Research [item 6] Tom Hawthorn, Head, Policy

[item 6] Michela Palese, Policy Manager [item 6] Mel Davidson, Head, Support and

Improvement [items 6 and 11] Apologies and welcome The Chair welcomed all to the

meeting, with no apologies received. The Board was advised of the sad news that our

colleague Richard Jordan passed away peacefully over the weekend, following a short

illness. The Board noted Richard's commitment to democracy, which had shone through

his work at the Commission over many years. His dedication to supporting the police

to prevent electoral fraud and his expertise in electoral integrity made him highly

respected not only within the Commission, but across police forces and the CPS. He

has left a lasting legacy. It was noted that many colleagues of the Commission had

known Richard for a long time, and that the thoughts of staff and Commissioners were

with his wife and daughter. Declarations of interest Resolved: That the Board noted

no new declared interests. Minutes (EC 108/22) Resolved: That the minutes of the

Board meeting on 23 February 2022 be agreed. Commission Board action tracker (EC

109/22) The Board discussed the recruitment of the role of the Independent Adviser on

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to the Commission Board, with a recent

message circulated to the Board, advising on the launch of the recruitment campaign

with agents Moloney Search. The Board discussed the value of already having expertise

within the Commission, such as having an EDI Lead, whilst identifying various

expertise amongst Commissioners. The Board discussed the remuneration, terms and

conditions of the Adviser's role and for the Linked Commissioners on EDI to be

involved in the review process of candidates. The Board thanked the General Counsel

and the team for progressing with the recruitment campaign and continued work.

Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board.

Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 (EC 110/22) The Board discussed preparations

and planning of the September, October and February Board meetings, an additional

Away Day, and extending the end times of Board meetings in order to capture fuller

discussions of strategic topics, with a possibility of having every third Board

meeting extended to include fuller deep dive discussion topics where necessary. It

was noted that a risk appetite session would be added to the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23, along with identifying an area in the regions to hold the February Board meeting. Resolved: That the Board discussed and reviewed the Forward Plan of Board business for 2022/23, with pending topical items for scheduling.

May 2022 elections reporting (Oral) The Board received a presentation from the Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance. The presentation gave an overview of the conduct of the elections in the different parts of the UK, and covered activities following the local elections. It was noted that a further report would be received at the July Board meeting. The Head of Policy advised the Board of the upcoming key dates, leading to publishing the different election reports in mid-September 2022, after the relevant parliamentary body returns from its summer recess. The Board noted that the evaluation of the Welsh early voting pilots would be published before the statutory deadline of 5 August 2022. The Board discussed reports surrounding the abuse and intimidation of female candidates who stood for election in Northern Ireland, and noted the importance of including reference to this in the statutory report. The Board noted updates from the Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland Commissioners on their visits to polling stations and counts in their respective parts of the UK. The Board noted an update on the Chief Executive's visit to a number of polling stations across Tower Hamlets on polling day. The Board thanked the teams involved for all of their hard work and efforts on preparations to support the smooth running of the elections across the UK. Resolved: That the Board noted the presentation and oral updates and the emerging themes for reporting, including on the evaluation of Welsh local election pilots of early voting.

Chief Executive's update (a) Chief Executive's report (EC 111/22) The Chief Executive advised the Board that for the next meeting, a new style format of the Chief Executive's report would be submitted, paying more attention to the Board's focus on particular topics. The Board noted the priorities and key themes set out in the report, since the Chief Executive has been in post. The themes were around Culture, Basic People enablers, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Elections Act and IT. The Board requested sight of a report into the extent to which bullying and harassment was an issue within the Commission, which was reported to a meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee in 2021, as well as an update on work done following the report. They also requested more of a strategic insight on the new digital IT implementation programme. Resolved: That the Board welcomed the report and noted the work across the breadth of the Commission, in meeting its role and responsibilities.

(b) Elections Act update (EC 112/22) The Director, Regulation introduced an update on the Elections Act since receiving Royal Assent, with key changes and messages on the Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS). The Board discussed that the Commission would continue to act as an independent regulator and noted that ministers and representatives of all parties had expressed the importance of the Electoral Commission's independence during the parliamentary debates. The Board noted the importance of clear engagement with the Speaker's Committee. Resolved: That the Board noted the update.

(c) Quarterly performance update report 2021/22 – Q4 (EC 113/22) Resolved: That the Board noted the delivery of our work programme and that the budget was being managed. Key messages for the Annual Report (EC 114/22) The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report, which proposed key messages overall and by Goal. It also included key performance information, and key events and achievements for the year. The Board gave feedback on some improvements to finalise the document. It noted that a lot of the structure set out in the Annual Report was determined by statute, so our key messages will fit into that structure. Resolved: That the Board was content and

agreed the proposed key messages. public awareness campaign approach (EC 115/22) The Director, Communications, Policy and Research introduced the report, welcoming input from linked Commissioners on finalising the paper. The Board noted that the Commission had significant expertise in delivering campaigns in the context of elections, but that voter ID posed a very different challenge requiring a fresh approach. The outlined proposal was set out in the paper, including in relation to audience breakdown; time pressure in relation to confirmation of the policy; and interrelation with the voter registration campaign. The Board discussed the importance of delivering this campaign well, of ensuring good value for money and the establishment of clear statistical objectives. It reflected on the proposed approach and phasing of the campaign, and the risks to delivery, including of the UK government not meeting its own delivery requirements. Resolved: That the Board welcomed and agreed the approach, and that the linked Commissioners would carry the Board interests through. Risk appetite statement (EC 116/22) Resolved: That the Board considered the risk appetite statement agreeing for a risk appetite workshop to be scheduled on to the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23, to agree the direction of travel and test our tolerance level. Action: A Risk appetite workshop to be scheduled onto the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23. Action owner: Director, Finance and Corporate Services Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) performance standards (EC 117/22) The Board received the report on the outlined approach to updating the RO performance standards framework and proposed approach for its use. The Board were advised that the statutory powers only covered Great Britain and that work was underway to continue to press for future extension to Northern Ireland, which had been a longstanding recommendation. Resolved: That the Board agreed and supported the outlined approach. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, on their work following their meeting yesterday. The Board noted that the Committee considered the internal audit reports and agreed the website management, follow-up and electoral fraud audits, with discussions on quality assurance scheduled for a future Audit and Risk Committee meeting. The Board also noted an update from the National Audit Office (NAO), a paper on recruitment and retention and the schedule of audit recommendations. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee advised the Board that a paper on information risk management was received, designed to allow the Committee to provide the Accounting Officer with the Committee's independent review of information assurance. The Committee reviewed the detailed report on Information Risk Management, exploring the risk issues identified and proposed mitigation plans. It considered that the Commission is bearing high degrees of risk arising from its outdated information technology systems; and it noted the resilience issues and potential security vulnerabilities. The Committee welcomed the activities underway aimed at addressing or mitigating those risks. It noted that a proper assessment of the effectiveness of overall information risk management had been conducted but it did not consider that the risks identified should be tolerated long-term by the organisation. The Committee wishes to monitor these risks through regular reporting. It was content to provide the Accounting Officer with assurance that the management of information risk has been independently reviewed. Resolved: That the Board noted the updates.