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with local authorities. The Board thanked the team for their time and updates.

Declarations of interests The Board noted an updated declarations of interests from:

Commissioner Alex Attwood: Declaration of financial interest: undertaking research on general policing issues which come before the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and its committees in connection with the role of a member of the NIPB. Member of the Electoral Commission for Ireland (“An Coimisiún”) The Board noted that Commissioners, the Executive Team and Independent Advisers declarations of interests were recently updated, and that these registers would be published on the external website shortly.

Minutes (EC 167/23) Resolved: That the Board agreed the minutes of the Board meeting 23 November 2022, subject to minor amendments.

Matters arising: That the Board noted that the Director, Regulation would circulate information to the Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Committee, regarding the closed project to redevelop Political Finance Online.

Commission Board action tracker (EC 168/23) The Board requested that the open actions include detail as to progress on each item. The Board noted that the note covering actions with progress, taken at the Belfast Board Away Day, was still to be circulated to commissioners and attendees for information. The Board requested that the ‘Write Off’ report be periodically circulated for information to commissioners.

Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions.

Chief Executive’s update (EC 169/23) The Chief Executive reported that the team was undertaking engagement work with a range of Parliamentary Committees, including in relation to the Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS). Engagement has also been undertaken with non-party campaigners. The Director, Regulation reported to the Board that consultations arising from Elections Act provisions have proceeded well, with strong engagement from stakeholders. A consultation on statutory guidance for digital imprints closed before Christmas, and a consultation on a Code of Practice for third party campaigners closes on 20 January 2023. Reports will be drafted following the consultations. The Director, Regulation reported that both projects are on track for delivery to the Department of Levelling Up and Housing officials in the agreed timeframes. The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance updated the Board on progress with the implementation of voter ID and the new accessibility provisions which come into effect from the May 2023 elections, and in preparations for the subsequent tranches of changes arising from the Elections Act 2022. On devolved electoral reform and the Welsh and Scottish Government consultations, the first has been responded to and work is being undertaken on developing a response to the second for a mid-March deadline. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research provided the Board an update on the voter ID campaign, which was launched the previous Monday, including on the advertising channels being used and the civil society partnership activity to reach key at risk demographic groups. The Board welcomed the quality of the materials published and the initial response to the campaign. The Board noted that the Commission was cautious in engaging with influencers due to risks around past and future political activity of the individual. The Board noted that there were a range of online post forums used which provided opportunities to engage. The Board welcomed the extension to include Commissioners’ engagement in the meetings of note section in the Chief Executive’s update and requested that further detail be provided. The Board noted the continued concern regarding the SPS and that the Executive Team was in regular contact with officials in the relevant Government Department. The Board further noted that the Chair has stated the position of the Commission in writing.

Resolved: That the Board agreed that Chris Ruane be the linked Commissioner for electoral registration.

Resolved: That the Board noted the Chief Executive’s report. Forward Plan of Board business

2022/23 and 2023/24 (EC 170/23) Resolved: That the Board noted the Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 and 2023/24. Board effectiveness review 2022/23 (EC 171/23) The Board noted responses from members of the Board to the questionnaire to internally assess the effectiveness of the Board. The responses indicated that there were strengths in oversight and strategic functions. It also identified opportunities to up skill in the areas of risk as well as opportunities for Commissioners to use their current skills to assist the work of the Commission. Members of the Board welcomed opportunities to discuss issues in a semi formal forum, such as the pre meeting Commissioners' dinner which could be developed. As part of the process to articulate the 'one team' theme, the Board explored opportunities for Commissioners to work more closely with staff. The Board noted that the effectiveness review was an internal Board exercise and that the views of the Executive Team and staff were not sought regarding the effectiveness of the Board on this occasion. The Board noted that there would be a full external review in the next financial year which would undertake a 360 degree analysis of the effectiveness of the Board. Resolved: That the Board noted the report and agreed to the proposed recommendations and actions arising from the Board effectiveness review 2022/23.

Main Estimate 2023/24 budgets (EC 172/23) The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced this item reporting to the Board that although the Board and the Executive Team agreed the Main Estimate 2023/24 in September 2022 to enable submission to the Senedd and Scottish Parliament, for audit purposes there was a requirement for the Board to formally agree the Main Estimate 2023/24 for submission to the Speaker's Committee. Resolved: That the Board formally agreed the Main Estimate 2023/24.

Board skills matrix and succession planning (EC 173/23) The General Counsel introduced this item reporting to the Board that there had been a shift in the skills matrix demonstrating a greater knowledge and interest in a range of areas from the previous survey undertaken. However, the skills matrix survey also identified a knowledge and interest gap in the areas of audit and risk. The Board discussed whether the skills matrix had identified and measured the right skills. The Board noted that as the induction process was developed, Commissioners should obtain a more in depth understanding of the Commission. Resolved: That the Board noted the results of the skills matrix audit.

Improvements to registration and voting: increasing resilience and participation (EC 174/23) The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance and the Policy Manager reported to the Board on the work being undertaken to develop feasibility studies of advance voting, mobile voting, voting anywhere and voting hubs. The Board noted that the team were thinking creatively to identify potential options for modernising the voting experience. The Board discussed that there were certain groups who were underrepresented on the electoral register, such as young people and recent movers. The team reported that there were discussions being undertaken with agencies such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, to refresh our understanding of how data sharing could work to support improvements to electoral registration. The Board further explored the potential benefits of automatic registration and noted that this was an area that the Welsh Government was already actively considering. The Board noted that in addition to the resilience of voting processes, the transparency of how these work, including in relation to the counting of votes, is another important consideration. Resolved: That the Board should be recirculated the 2019 paper on modernising the electoral process and provided with a copy of the Welsh Government White Paper on electoral reform. Resolved: That the Board noted the update on progress with the project.

Embedding and advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in the Electoral Commission (EC 175/23) The General Counsel introduced the paper with the Independent Adviser to

the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Chair thanked the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for his work on the paper. The Board noted that the objective of the paper was to provide added value to the EDI discussions within the Commission. The Board agreed that the report was insightful and welcomed that it was recommendation focused. Resolved: That the Board supported the recommendations in the report. Resolved: That the Board considered and agreed to appoint a group led by the Chief Executive and the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plus three other Commissioners to develop the recommendations and ensure delivery.

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Home How we make decisions Electoral Commission Board On this page Who was at the meeting Apologies and welcome Declarations of interest Minutes Commission Board action tracker Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 National Audit Office (NAO) RSM's annual internal audit report Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) 2021/22 to the Commission Board Annual Report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee 2021/22 to the Commission Board Pay remit 2022/23 Board effectiveness matters Chief Executive's update Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair First published: 9 August 2022 Last updated: 22 August 2022 Meeting summary Date: Wednesday 22 June 2022 Time: 9:30am to 1:00pm Location: In person and by video conference Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 20 July 2022 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Pullinger, Chair Rob Vincent Sue Bruce Alex Attwood Sarah Chambers 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] Tracey Blackman, Head, Finance and [items 6, 7, 8 and 9] Apologies and welcome Apologies were received from Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Paul Redfern, Independent Adviser to the Audit and Risk Committee. Paul would continue to maintain relationships with Commissioners and on occasion provide advice where applicable. Paul would be contributing to the end of year reports. Declarations of interest Resolved: That the Board noted no new declared interests. Minutes (EC 118/22) Resolved: That the minutes of the Board meeting on 18 May 2022 be agreed. Commission Board action tracker (EC 119/22) The Board noted that the report on Bullying and Harassment which went to a meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee last year, was circulated to Commissioners. It was noted that the remaining actions were delayed due to clarification on what would be covered, and in places the need to organise external speakers. These items will be scheduled for board business this year. Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 (EC 120/22) The Board discussed how best to capture and progress any actions from the deep dive sessions at the October meeting in Northern Ireland and the England region meeting in February 2023. The potential for an annual discussion around the state of the electoral system was discussed, potentially following the May elections. This would enable the Board to take stock and aid forward planning. Resolved: That the Board discussed and reviewed the Forward Plan of Board business for 2022/23, with pending topical items for scheduling. National Audit Office (NAO) (EC 121/22) The Board discussed the Audit completion report (including management letter) on the 2021/22 financial statements audit. The Board were advised that whilst there were only minor issues still left to be resolved, the NAO could not provide assurance at this stage, but at the same time, were not anticipating any significant changes. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee advised that at their meeting earlier in the week, they were satisfied with the reasonable assurance from NAO. Resolved: That the Board was content with delegating the final approvals to the Accounting Officer and the Commission Chair on the NAO completion report and approve any further disclosure amendments unless they were significant in nature. RSM's annual internal audit report (EC 122/22) The Board considered the annual internal audit opinion, prepared by

internal auditors RSM, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes. The opinion would contribute to the organisation's annual governance reporting. The Audit and Risk Committee Chair advised the Board that despite the report providing reasonable assurance, the Committee was working with RSM to further enhance the internal audits for the coming year. The Board discussed and noted that at a previous meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, an audit on PF Online procurement was deferred. Resolved: That the Board noted RSM's audit opinion. Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 (EC 123/22) The Board received the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 following the Audit and Risk Committee's review of the Report and Accounts including the governance statement, at their meeting on 20 June. The Board noted that this was the first year in which the accounts also have to include specific reports on Scottish and Welsh devolved functions. The Board supported the inclusion of dedicated sections devoted to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Board discussed finalisation of the foreword for consistency and welcomed the overall approach on how the report was written, thanking staff colleagues for their work thus far. The Board noted that following discussions at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting, the Committee Chair recommended to the Board, delegated authority to both the Commission Chair and the Chief Executive: (i) that it adopted the accounts and, (ii) the accounting officer approved the governance statement and signed the accounts as appropriate Resolved: That the Board approved and adopted the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021/22, subject to final NAO approval, to be signed by the Accounting Officer and submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General for certification. The audited Report and Accounts would then be laid before the House of Commons, House of Lords and Scottish and Welsh Parliaments in July. Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) 2021/22 to the Commission Board (EC 124/22) The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee introduced the report, summarising the work of the Committee during the year 2021/22. The Board noted the Committee's annual review of information assurance and further work planned to enhance cyber security and reduce risk. The Board noted that a risk appetite workshop would be scheduled this year for the Board to understand further risk management, and how this is linked to the Commission's objectives, helping with Board oversight whilst improving financial and budgetary controls. Resolved: That the Board noted the work of the Audit and Risk Committee during the year 2021/22. Annual Report of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee 2021/22 to the Commission Board (EC 125/22) The Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee introduced the report, summarising the work of the Committee during the year 2021/22. The Board welcomed the update noting recent activities of the Committee on workforce and recruitment retention risks, ways of working post Covid, exit payments, pay remit and the staff survey results 2021. The Board noted that whilst finalisation of the revised people strategy was due to be presented at the next Committee meeting, the Board discussed how best the Committee can engage more with staff colleagues on HR issues and the culture of the organisation. The Board noted that Commissioners are welcome to attend either of the two Committees as observers to better understand and engage in their work. Resolved: That the Board noted the work of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee during the year 2021/22. Pay remit 2022/23 (EC 126/22) Having regard to the desirability of keeping pay broadly in line with the Civil Service and considering wider comparisons, the Board considered the appropriate approach for the annual pay award remit for the Commission in 2022/23. The Board discussed the need for flexibility in recruiting staff and how to do this. The Board favoured recruiting

from wider, diverse geographical areas, and more flexibility on remote working, but acknowledged that there would be the need for certain teams to attend the office more than two days a week. This also raised discussions on office space and how that relates to our approach to recruitment. Resolved: That the Board agreed the proposed pay remit for the 2022/23 pay award. Board effectiveness matters (Oral) The Board received an oral update from the General Counsel on work planned for the review of Board effectiveness. The Board noted that this work would be carried out internally rather than using an external organisation and that a survey would be circulated via a survey platform to capture the Board's performance, insights and ways of strengthening the work between the executive and Board members whilst highlighting areas for further development. It was noted that the survey would be anonymised and there would be extra text space for additional comments. The survey would be reported to the October Board meeting as part of the Board effectiveness review item. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral update. Chief Executive's update (Oral) The Board received an oral update on operations and matters arising, in particular updates on digital transformation, Elections Act implementation, the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and the Belfast Board away day in October. The Chief Executive advised the Board on work planned for the Commission's digital infrastructure, following the appointment of the new Head of Digital who started at the Commission this week. The Board noted that the Commission has been responding to the aging IT infrastructure and plans are in place to move services to Cloud based infrastructure. Further updates including any funding gaps would be reported to the Board in the coming months. The Board noted that the revised people strategy was in its final iterations and this would be received at the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting in July, before wider circulation to the Board. It was noted that there was a renewed focus on learning and development in the strategy. Learning and development taster sessions have been programmed for two days in July and, a roll out of a leadership programme across the organisation. It was reported that we have engaged with external parties who have offered to run leadership workshops, providing colleagues with an opportunity to take part in masterclasses to develop their skills. The Board noted an update on the Elections Act and in particular recent discussions with the Minister related to implementation of the provisions. It was agreed that Elections Act implementation will be a topic for discussion at the next Board meeting in July. The Board noted arrangements for the Belfast Board away day in October were underway, with thanks to Commissioner Katy Radford for her input so far. It was noted that we are arranging a two day programme, with an option for staff colleagues and Commissioners to travel on the Sunday and have dinner. We are starting to programme and secure speakers and Katy Radford will circulate an email to share some thoughts for the programming. An update will be brought to the July Board meeting. The General Counsel updated the Board on the recruitment of the Independent Adviser to the Commission Board on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Board noted that the campaign is now closed with twenty six applications received. The longlisting took place this week, agreeing on nine applicants. The agency will hold interviews to produce a shortlist of candidates next month. The Board noted that the selection panel were impressed with the quality of applicants so far, from a wide range of backgrounds. The Board discussed the scope of the role and how this role would link in with work already scoped out with the EDI lead and the remit of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee. There was a desire to ensure that the Independent Adviser would have an effective role within the Board and Commission with discussions on expectations and value for money. Resolved:

That the Board noted the oral updates. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee Chair (Oral) The Board received an oral update on the work of the Committee at their meeting earlier in the week. The Board noted activities on the RSM internal audit on quality assurance and the progress report, as well as the internal audit annual opinion. Further work considered was on the National Audit Office report, Annual Report and Resource Accounts (including the governance statement) 2021/22, Annual Report of the Committee 2021/22 to the Commission Board and Committee effectiveness. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral updates.

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Commission Board action tracker Resolved: That the Board noted the progress against actions requested by the Board. Chief Executive's update including, the performance report quarter two 2022/23 The Chief Executive provided an oral update on operations and matters arising, advising on the various Parliamentary hearings held in recent weeks. It was noted that the Board meeting in March would be used as a strategic planning session for setting the forward agendas including agreeing priorities within the corporate plan. The Board noted that the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) met during the week and were presented with an update on the people strategy, noting key milestones for the organisation. RemCo advised that they would like to meet four times a year, in order to cover a range of business topics coming through for future years and as a way of tracking progress against the People Strategy It was noted that the Forward Plan of Board and Committee business for 2023/24 would be worked through for Board and Committee meetings from April 2023 onwards, considering our plans and utilising the agenda for upcoming meetings accordingly. Our teams are working on substantial projects right now and it would be important to be realistic. The Board noted an update on the scheduled Board meeting in February, around travel arrangements, logistics and looking at inviting local stakeholders such as representatives from local parties and community groups. Actions from the previous Board event in October would be circulated to Commissioners for information. The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance provided an update covering contingency planning for a Northern Ireland Assembly election, secondary legislation on voter ID and new draft guidance on accessibility. The proposed timings for subsequent tranches of Elections Act changes, including those relating to overseas voters and online absent vote applications, were also highlighted, with the challenges these are likely to present for our implementation activities being noted. The Director, Communications, Policy and Research provided an update covering preparations for the new public awareness campaign on voter ID, ahead of its launch in January, and in relation to the UK Government's proposed strategy and policy statement, covering the ongoing consultation, process and preparations for the final agreed statement. The Director, Regulation provided an update outlining the latest position on the implementation of the campaigner provisions in the Elections Act, including the provisions for party registration and notional spending coming into force later this month, the consultation underway on the digital imprint regime, and a consultation due to open shortly on a code of practice for third party campaigners. There was also an update on innovations in regulatory support, and on digital projects. It was noted that an announcement had just come through during the meeting, on the Judgement from the Supreme Court case on whether a proposed Scottish Independence Referendum Bill related to reserved matters. A note on this judgement would be circulated to Commissioners following this meeting. The Board received and noted the quarterly finance and performance report quarter two 2022/23. Resolved: That the Board noted the oral updates on operations and matters arising. Resolved: That the Board noted the quarterly finance and performance report quarter two 2022/23. Forward Plan of Board business 2022/23 Resolved: That the Board noted the report. Supplementary Estimate for 2022/23 The Director, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report advising the Board on whether to submit a Supplementary Estimate to the Speaker's Committee. It was noted that supplementary estimates had been submitted to the Scottish Parliament and Senedd Cymru, to adjust contributions for pay awards and campaigns expenditure. Resolved: That the Board agreed the Accounting Officer's recommendation not to submit a Supplementary Estimate for the UK Parliament. Resolved: That the Board agreed with the virement of funding

from Event to Elections Act with the final amount to be determined at year-end by the Accounting Officer. Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) performance standards The Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance introduced the report setting out new performance standards for Returning Officers (ROs) and updated standards for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), which had been discussed previously with the Board in May and widely consulted on subsequent to that. It was noted that the consultation process had been positive and received widespread support for the proposed approach, with broad agreement that the new frameworks will provide a robust basis for the delivery of well-run elections covering the range of RO and ERO functions, support the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes, and enable transparent reporting on the delivery of elections at a local level and across Great Britain. The different legislative position in Northern Ireland was also noted, with no equivalent power existing for setting, monitoring and reporting on standards. The Board discussed ensuring we take opportunities to highlight and celebrate best practice and to engage Parliamentarians and support them to use the available data to challenge locally and help drive improvements. The Board also discussed the importance of measuring outputs, including levels of registration. The Board welcomed the report, thanking the team for the update. Resolved: That the Board agreed the new RO and updated ERO performance standards as detailed within the report, to enable them to be laid before the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments in December 2022. Draft Enforcement Policy review The Director, Regulation introduced the report, advising the Board on the Commission's enforcement policy, which is periodically reviewed. Resolved: That the Board agreed areas of the policy proposed to amend or expand, noting that a statutory public consultation would follow early in 2023, with formal approval from the Board on the new policy. Resolved: That the Board agreed to delegate agreement of the final policy subject to the above, to two or three Commissioners. Revised Commission Board and Committee meeting dates for 2023/24 Resolved: That the Board agreed the revised Commission Board and Committee meeting dates for 2023/24, incorporating an extra meeting of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee into their annual meeting cycle. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee updated the Board on the work of the Committee at its meeting in September. The draft minutes of the meeting would be circulated to members of the Commission Board separately. Update from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) Chair The Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee updated the Board on the work of the Committee at its meetings in July and November. The Board noted that progress had been made in relation to the people strategy and the Committee would now be meeting four times a year in order to fulfil its remit. Annual review of schedule of internal policies and codes Resolved: That the Board noted the annual review of schedule of internal policies and codes. Annual declarations of interests Resolved: That the Board noted the annual declarations of interests for Commissioners, Executive Team and the Independent Advisers to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Commission Board. Risk appetite workshop The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Independent Adviser to this Committee, chaired a session on risk appetite, looking at a revised version of the Commission's strategic risks. The Board discussed and provided a steer as to its risk appetite in relation to each of the areas outlined in the paper. Resolved: That the Board agreed for a risk register template to be developed, demonstrating the residual risk scores as agreed, and brought back to a future Board meeting.