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plan was reviewed. The challenges, risks, and issues around frontline delivery (EC 84/20) The Chief Executives of two local authorities joined the meeting to provide an update on the challenges facing local government and the impact of these on how electoral services can be delivered effectively and efficiently. The Board heard of the importance of the successful delivery of elections, and considered the particular challenges and opportunities of delivering the elections in May 2021 against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic, including a likely rise in postal voting, and possible staffing difficulties. Both Chief Executives also stressed the need to make progress on modernising electoral processes to reflect the digital age, if younger voters were not to be alienated, and the rapidly changing local authority landscape as authorities were merged and reorganised. Financial pressures were meanwhile increasing. There was a case for greater collaboration between authorities, for example in dealing with suppliers. The Board heard that the local authorities appreciated the support they received from the Commission and in particular its regional teams. They paid tribute to the electoral community who continued to deliver largely well-run elections despite the financial pressures. The Board noted the emphasis on the importance of modernising the electoral process and keeping it aligned with public expectations and the needs of voters, while still respecting the need for security and public confidence. After the local authority representatives had left the meeting the Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance, provided a progress update to the Board on work being carried out by the Commission to research voter attitudes in relation to modernisation of the electoral process, and on work to develop and implement a strategy to help increase local authority resilience and capacity, with an emphasis on the consideration to be given to sub-national electoral coordination structures in England. The Board discussed the possibility of involving Commissioners in this. Action: A more regular opportunity to hear directly from local authorities to be built into the forward plan. Action: An update at each Board meeting on the state of preparations for the May 2021 elections to be added to the forward plan. Resolved: That the points made in discussion be noted, and that Stephen Baker and Graham Farrant be thanked for their contribution to the discussion.

Corporate planning 2021/2026 (EC 85/20) The Board received an update on progress with the development of the Corporate Plan for 2021/2026. They discussed the need to balance ambition and realism in recognition of the current operating context and to put voters at the centre of the plan. The Board considered whether the plan was currently too internally focused and whether external stakeholders had been sufficiently engaged on the development. The Board considered the issue of the timing of the plan and the appointment of the new Commission Chair, as well as the reports expected from the CSPL and PACAC. It was noted that we have a current five year corporate plan in place and the Board considered whether it would be preferable to take forward a one year Budget Estimate and supporting narrative for 2021/22 to allow the new corporate plan to be developed in discussion with the new Chair. It was agreed that whilst work on the new corporate plan should be continued, the Speaker's Committee and the devolved administrations should be approached to establish whether they would agree to a delay to allow discussions with the new Chair. A one year Budget Estimate and supporting narrative could then be produced for 2021/22. Action: Work to continue on the Corporate Plan 2021/2026 with a view to agreeing it with an incoming Chair, and that a one-year Budget Estimate and supporting narrative should be produced for 2021/22. Confirmation of this approach to be established with the Speaker's Committee and the devolved administrations. Resolved: That the work so far on the Corporate Plan 2021/2026 had the right elements in it, but more work was

needed, for example to ensure the context of the post-COVID world was fully reflected, as well as the relationship between our work and that of other players such as the ICO. Resolved: That the Audit Committee further consider the risk appetites associated with the draft Corporate Plan 2021/2026. Chief Executive's update (EC 86/20) The Board discussed the update and particularly noted the ongoing implications on Commission work and staff of the coronavirus pandemic. The Board noted the preparations for May 2021 elections and the regular review of contingency plans. Resolved: That the update be noted.