

Board minutes: 5 June 2019 | Electoral Commission    Search

Board minutes: 5 June 2019    You are in the Electoral Commission Board section

[Home](#) [How we make decisions](#) [Electoral Commission Board](#) On this page [Apologies and introductions](#) [Declarations of interest](#) [Update on May polls](#) [Modernising electoral registration project](#) [Confirmation of actions arising from the 24 April 2019 Board Effectiveness review](#) [Performance Report Quarter 4 2018/19](#) [Update on Ways of Working](#) [Forward plan of Board business 2019/20](#) [Action tracker](#) [Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland](#) [First published: 17 July 2019](#) [Last updated: 12 August 2019](#) [Meeting overview](#) [Date: Wednesday 5 June 2019](#) [Time: 9:30am to 12:30pm](#) [Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London](#) [Date of next scheduled meeting: Wednesday 26 June 2019](#) [Who was at the meeting](#) [Who was at the meeting](#) [John Holmes, Chair](#) [Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Elan Closs Stephens Rob Vincent Sarah Chambers Stephen Gilbert Sue Bruce \(Videoconference\)](#) [Bob Posner, Chief Executive](#) [Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Administration and Guidance](#) [Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation](#) [Craig Westwood, Director, Communications and Research](#) [Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services](#) [David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance](#) [David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance](#) [Mark Williams, Policy Manager, Electoral Policy](#) [Jo Crofton-Diggins, Head of ICT and Facilities](#) [Amanda Kelly, Legal Counsel](#) [Tom Hawthorn, Head of Policy](#) [Katy Knock, Policy Manager](#) [Phil Thompson, Head of Research](#) [Apologies and introductions](#) [Joan Walley sent her apologies. The chair welcomed Amanda Kelly to her first meeting.](#) [Declarations of interest](#) [No new declarations of interest. Minutes of the Commission Board meeting of 13 March, 9 April, and 24 April 2019, and Commissioner Day on 24 April 2019 \(EC 26/19, 27/19, 28/19, and 29/19\)](#) [Resolved: That the minutes of the Commission Board meeting on 13 March, 9 April, and 24 April 2019 be agreed. The record of the Commissioner Day on 24 April was noted.](#) [Update on May polls](#) [Bob Posner introduced the item and commented that the work arising from an election could last up to two years after polling day in some instances. The chair thanked staff for their efforts throughout the recent polls. This was endorsed by the Board. The Board heard that the local authority elections had run well. However, the late confirmation by government of the European Parliamentary election had been a factor in the delivery of that poll. Despite this, the internal structures we had developed to prepare for unexpected electoral events had worked well to support the delivery of the European Parliamentary election. Lessons learnt from this contingency planning would inform future electoral events. Due to the compressed period prior to the registration deadline, and despite efforts by ourselves and local authorities to publicise the requirements, a number of non-UK European Union citizens resident in the UK were unable to complete their registration on time. Some were turned away from the polling station on election day. It would not be possible to quantify how many people were affected in this way, but we had asked for more information from Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers, including about when the registration forms were sent out, and what their response rate was. In addition there were overseas voters who did not receive their ballot in time, which had previously been the case in other recent unscheduled polls. We had previously identified and informed government and parliament of a number of areas where legislative changes were required to improve ease of registering for non-UK European Union citizens resident in the UK and ease of voting for overseas electors. The Board heard of the new ways that information was gathered to support the monitoring of campaigners and political parties during the regulated period. This was a more intelligence-based approach than in the past. It also included the use of online ad libraries. The data](#)

collected through the ad libraries was used to identify sources of advertising spending; in some instances we then contacted those people to determine whether their spending should have been reported to us. However, these libraries did not provide as much assurance as we would like, as their definition of digital political campaigning was not the same as in law. The Board also heard of the approach we took to determine the level of monitoring of political parties. Risk factors that related to each party were considered before a risk rating was assigned based on a range of factors, including the experience of individuals involved in the party and our previous interactions with them. There was also an expectation that we would meet with parties with higher risk profiles while they were compiling their returns. The Board received an update on the registration campaigns run prior to the local elections and the European Parliamentary election. These campaigns significantly exceeded their targets for registration before both polls. The communications team had started to analyse more detailed information on how these campaigns performed, and would publish an evaluation later this year. This information would also inform next year's campaign. The Board also heard about the "Your vote is yours alone" campaign, through which we provided resources to local authorities to raise awareness of electoral fraud. The Board was told about the second round of voter identification pilots. The pilots ran in ten local authority areas during the local elections. These local authority areas covered a greater range of areas than previous pilots, which allowed for a broader range of evidence. There would be further analysis of data, informing our statutory report on the pilots, and the Board would return to the issue at its next meeting. The Board asked about the visit to the Brexit Party, and heard that it was normal for us to contact parties close to polls. Bob Posner noted that in other regulatory areas such activity was a normal aspect of life. Political finance regulation was a heightened area of sensitivity, and as we were increasingly regulating in real-time, we sometimes needed to respond to issues during campaigns. The Board heard about the scope of the review of the Brexit Party, and that the visit had resulted in a large number of emails and phone calls. Where appropriate, we had notified the police of the content of a few of these emails and phone calls. Action: For the next meeting's item on the voter identification pilots, include information on other forms of voter fraud (postal, proxy etc), so the Board can understand the proportionality that Voter identification pilots seek to address. Confirm the number of parties that applied for registration before the European Parliamentary election but were not able to be processed in time. Modernising electoral registration project (EC 30/19) Ailsa Irvine introduced the item, and provided an update on different feasibility studies that assessed potential routes to improving the registration system. The Board heard that this work had put us in a strong position to inform and influence public debate on issues relating to electoral registration reform. The Board also heard that we were establishing a contact campaign that would involve a number of meetings with key stakeholders likely to be interested in the information that we had collated in the report. The Board commended the work of the team in producing the report, and discussed the different approaches to ensuring that the paper contributed helpfully to the public debate on changes. A proactive approach was recommended. The Board encouraged staff to be clear about how data collected for this purpose would be used and managed. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Confirmation of actions arising from the 24 April 2019 Board Effectiveness review (EC 31/19) Bob Posner introduced the paper, and sought confirmation of the actions noted in Appendix A of the paper. Rob Vincent recalled that the actions needed to include more systematic appraisal of individual members of the Board. Resolved: That the paper be agreed with the addition

of appraisal of individual members of the Board. Performance Report Quarter 4 2018/19 (EC 32/19) Bob Posner introduced the paper and noted the key areas where future action would be targeted. The Board discussed whether we had done enough to effectively communicate the roles of the organisation. On the rate of staff turnover, it was noted that this was at least partly a function of the number of fixed-term contracts and the nature and size of the organisation. Kieran Rix spoke to the underspend in the last financial year as being well within acceptable public sector accounting expectations, and gave a brief overview of expected spending for the 2019/20 financial year. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Update on Ways of Working (EC 34/19) Ailsa Irvine introduced the item and provided a reminder of the objectives of the project. Jo Crofton-Diggins provided an update on the accommodation negotiations for the London office, and on the required investment in technology. There was discussion on how to use our office space more effectively and more efficiently. Resolved: That the paper be noted. Forward plan of Board business 2019/20 (EC 35/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Action tracker (EC 36/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted. Chair and Chief Executive's meeting and meetings of note in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (EC 37/19) Resolved: That the paper be noted.