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Meeting overview Date: Wednesday 22 January 2020 Location: Boothroyd Room, 3 Bunhill Row, London Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting John Holmes, Chair Alasdair Morgan Alastair Ross Anna Carragher Sarah Chambers Elan Closs Stephens Rob Vincent Stephen Gilbert Joan Walley Craig Westwood, Director, Communications, Policy and Research Kieran Rix, Director, Finance and Corporate Services Louise Edwards, Director, Regulation Ailsa Irvine, Director, Electoral Guidance and Administration David Bailey, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance David Meek, Senior Adviser, Governance Tim Crowley, Head of Digital Communications and Learning Emma Hartley, Head of Campaigns and Corporate Identity Ben Hancock, Campaigns and Corporate Communications Manager Elaine Spooner, Senior Communications Officer, Campaigns Jess Cook, Senior Communications Officer, Campaigns and Corporate Communications Charles Courtier, Chairman, MSQ Partners Our approach to public awareness campaigns The Chair noted that this informal item was scheduled at the Board's request from a previous meeting. The Chair invited the Director of Communications, Policy, and Research and Charles Courtier, the Chairman of MSQ Partners, to address the Commissioners. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research informed the Commissioners that MSQ Partners was the agency currently contracted to support our public awareness campaigns, particularly the campaign to encourage people to register to vote. Charles Courtier advised the Commissioners of the four strategic parameters that shape public awareness campaigns: objective, audience, engagement, and incentive / reward. He discussed how these parameters related to the Commission, including the spectrum of possible objectives, with public awareness at one end and behavioural change at the other. The Commission was closer to the latter. As far as audience selection was concerned, between going broad or narrow, the Commission was in the middle, but was particularly interested in affecting the behaviour of a small part of the audience. On the spectrum of emotional versus rational appeal, the Commission was closer to the rational end, but did use emotive language. In terms of 'carrot versus stick', the Commission was clearly closer to the carrot end of the spectrum, but specific rewards were obviously lacking. In discussion, the Commissioners expressed an interest in exploring more emotive advertising messaging which might increase impact and outcomes. The Commissioners had a discussion about demonstrating direct impact and the difficulty in separating out the success of the Commission's activity from that of others with the same objective. Some of the latter did of course use the materials we provided. Work with partners was an important part of our activity. The Commissioners heard of the ways that we were able to track the number of people applying to register to vote as a result of exposure to our campaign, but there were limitations in determining cause and effect. Some innovations available through digital advertising, that could more closely track the success of digital campaigns, were not possible under current gov.uk website restrictions. It was noted that there were noticeable increases in the number of people accessing the website following the broadcast of campaign advertising on television, for example during the UK Parliamentary General Election leaders' debate. We were also able to track the number of people that accessed the registration website by typing in the web page address directly, which indicated that they had seen the advertising where the address was

promoted. We were not in a position to gather information on the journey of someone registering online, for example how many times they had seen our campaign, whether they had seen digital and television advertising, and whether they had also seen advertising from other campaigns promoting registration. The Commissioners discussed the targeting of groups of potential voters who were known to be less likely to be registered, such as young people, those from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and recent home movers, and the balance of resource this was currently allocated within the overall campaign. The current and recent approach had been to direct our campaigns widely, so that they appealed to all voters, supported by other targeted activity through partnerships and online. The Commissioners heard that the public awareness campaigns supporting the May 2020 local election would include both campaigns that were widely aimed and campaigns that were targeted at underrepresented groups. The Commissioners expressed an appetite for increasing the proportion of resources allocated to the targeted aspect of such campaigns, ahead of future polls. The Commissioners discussed the challenge of targeting potential voters who were disengaged from politics and not persuaded of the importance of voting. The Director of Communications, Policy and Research noted that advertising was unlikely to be a value for money route to get people engaged with politics. This would be better addressed through education work, which the Commissioners had previously discussed, and also by parties and other campaigners whose role was to explain the merits of their policy positions. The Commissioners heard about work we were engaged on with partner organisations to address the educational aspects.