

The Electoral Commission

Minutes of the Executive Team meeting

6 May 2008

Present:

Peter Wardle (PW) (Chair)	Chief Executive
Lisa Klein (LK)	Director of Party and Election Finance
Stephen Rooney (SR)	Director of Communication
Andrew Scallan (AS)	Director of Electoral Administration and Boundaries
Carolyn Hughes (CH)	Director of Finance and Corporate Services

In attendance:

Katharine Sparrow (KS)	Minutes
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1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Clare Ettinghausen (CE).

2. Political Commissioners

2.1 Executive Team discussed the idea of 'Political Commissioners', and how the Commission should handle it, in preparation for the publication of the MoJ white paper. It was agreed more work needed to be carried out on how the different scenarios could be dealt with. It was also agreed further discussion with the Commissioners was needed. MoJ would be pressed to try to establish where their thinking on the idea was.

3. Elections May 2008

3.1 AS said overall the elections appeared to have gone well, although the count in London had been slower than expected. Executive Team agreed it would be useful to get hold of numbers of rejected ballot papers as soon as possible. PW suggested discussing themes and trends with the Commissioners in preparation for the post election seminars and reports. Executive Team agreed there would need to be read across between the post election reports and the examination of electoral administration, both of which were due to be published in July.

4. Any other business

4.1 Electoral Examination Project

AS said meetings would be held throughout May, and his team were starting to think about the format for the first draft of the report.

4.2 Performance Standards

AS said this data would be published later that week. PW suggested some briefing for the devolved and English officers on how to handle comments they might receive would be useful.

4.3 Procurement of support for PEF and EAB

AS said Tom Hawthorn was looking into this, and AS would talk to LK outside the meeting. Due to the sums for the work three separate quotes would be needed.

4.5 Government Procurement Card

GH had prepared an evaluation of the government procurement card recommending roll out across the Commission. CH would review the recommendation and would advise Executive Team if she thought this needed discussion.

4.6 Spring clean day

A spring clean day was proposed to be held at the end of May. The idea of a clear desk policy was raised; it was agreed further discussion around accommodation and storage needs was needed before the introduction of such a policy could be moved forward, but Executive Team were generally supportive of this direction.

The Electoral Commission

Minutes of the Executive Team meeting

Monthly Meeting

13 May 2008

Present:

Peter Wardle (PW) (Chair)

Clare Ettinghausen (CE)

Lisa Klein (LK)

Stephen Rooney (SR)

Andrew Scallan (AS)

Chief Executive

Deputy Chief Executive

Director of Party and Election Finance

Director of Communication

Director of Electoral Administration and
Boundaries

In attendance:

Katharine Sparrow (KS)

Minutes

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Carolyn Hughes (CH).

2. Management Team – competencies/personal development

- 2.1 Executive Team considered the key learning and development needs for Executive and Management Team members. It was agreed Executive Team would review this again once all personal development plans had been completed to see if there were any common themes emerging. There were some doubts about the value of all learning sessions being joint for both ET and MT. However other ways of gaining interaction between the two groups would be sought.
- 2.2 SR thought one area of corporate weakness was forward work-flow planning and the development of meaningful indicators for evaluation. It was agreed this could be a good area for Executive Team and Management Team to work together.
- 2.3 The idea of mentoring and a buddy system for new staff were discussed. Executive Team agreed all new members of staff should have a buddy. They thought internal mentoring should be thought about carefully; it was probably not appropriate for Executive Team members to mentor Management Team members.

2.4 CE thought there was still some scope for leadership skills to be developed. SR said specialist knowledge skills were also important to develop.

3. Revised regulated donee form

3.1 LK said the form had been reviewed to reduce its length and make it less complicated to complete. Executive Team gave their feedback; they also suggested it might be worth looking for expert input on form design.

4. Guide for 'Handling Allegations'

4.1 Executive Team agreed, with a few minor amendments, the guide was now in a suitable form to be put on the website.

5. PQs

5.1 SR gave an update on the handling of PQs: PW would wherever possible give a steer early on with a suggestion on how the question should be handled; Executive Team colleagues should seek to do the same, before anyone begins work on the detail of the drafting; the Public Affairs Team would do more work early on for likely supplementary questions; and more opportunity to attend the briefing session with Peter Viggers would be given to staff who 'owned' the questions. SR said they would be re-running the PQ training session and hoped Peter Viggers would be able to attend.

5.2 PW said the two main things to consider when dealing with PQs was the motivation for the question and the Commission's key message. He said it was also important to remember to write the answer in a style for speaking.

6. Review of summer holiday dates

6.1 Executive Team reviewed leave dates over the summer.

7. Project updates

7.1 Examination of electoral administration
Executive Team were updated on progress with the project. A full discussion would be held by Executive Team at its 10 June meeting prior to the formal Commission meeting discussion.

7.2 Boundary Review programme
Executive Team were updated on progress with project. CE said Legal had expressed some concerns around the implementation schedule.

7.3 Party funding review/white paper
LK updated Executive Team.

7.4 CORE

AS said there had been no change since last meeting but the Commission was meeting with MoJ again later that week.

7.5 Individual registration

AS said the Commission's position was becoming clearer.

8. Any other business

8.1 Chair recruitment

PW updated Executive Team on progress with the recruitment for a new Chair. He was holding informal meetings with the candidates on the shortlist; the final interviews were expected to be held on 14 May.

8.2 Lisbon Referendum in Republic of Ireland

AS said he would talk to Seamus Magee about eliciting an invitation for the Commission to observe the referendum.

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Minutes of the Executive Team meeting

20 May 2008

Present:

Clare Ettinghausen (CE) (Chair)	Deputy Chief Executive
Lisa Klein (LK)	Director of Party and Election Finance
Stephen Rooney (SR)	Director of Communication
Carolyn Hughes (CH)	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Andrew Scallan (AS)	Director of Electoral Administration and Boundaries

In attendance:

Katharine Sparrow (KS)	Minutes
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1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Peter Wardle (PW).

2. Parliamentary Advisory Group agenda

2.1 Executive Team considered items for the forthcoming Parliamentary Advisory Group meeting. SR would feedback to the Public Affairs Team.

3. Government legislative programme – elected police commissioners

3.1 PW had noticed the Government's legislative programme included proposals for elected police commissioners. Executive Team noted that if elections were held through local authorities the Commission was likely to be involved, either through issuing guidance and/or through the regulation of donations and expenses.

4. CORE update

4.1 AS said the Commission had met the Ministry of Justice the previous week for an update on progress with CORE. Mark Sweeney would be writing to AS setting out MoJ's plans.

4.2 AS said he would be talking to the Legal Team about the Commission's options if the Secretary of State was to use his powers of direction to

make the Commission CORE keeper.

- 4.3 The issue of where CORE would sit in the organisation was still to be resolved; Executive Team agreed this needed further discussion at a future meeting.

5. Annual Report update

- 5.1 SR said the draft Annual Report would shortly be circulated to Executive Team for their review; it was due for discussion at Executive Team on 3 June. A draft would be given to SY to read and then circulated to Commissioners for information.

6. Any other business

Values

- 6.1 SR said the Values Sub-Group had been following up on feedback from the Staff Event and had come up with three new draft core values; they were looking to see whether a fourth value, related to the customer focused areas of the Commission's work, was required.
- 6.2 Work would now be carried out to sense check the values before they were formally agreed and launched.

Boundary Committee

- 6.3 SR said following the note Archie Gall had sent round it would be worth revisiting the Commission's role once/if the Boundary Committee were extracted from the Commission

Bill training

- 6.4 LK said she was investigating training for her staff on the passage of a bill. If the training were to be run in-house she asked colleagues whether this would also be beneficial for any of their staff. Executive Team supported the idea.

Local Government Chronicle summit

- 6.5 PW had been invited to the LGC summit on 11-12 September. It was agreed the Commission probably didn't need to attend.

LGA conference

- 6.7 The LGA has rung to speak to PW about 'showcasing' the Commission at their Annual Conference. AS said the Commission was looking for opportunities to speak to the LGA. It was agreed the Public Affairs Team would investigate further.
[Post meeting note: The LGA had been trying to sell time on their Conference TV]

Performance Appraisals

- 6.8 PW reminded Executive Team that the deadline for the return of performance appraisal forms to HR was 6 June and for planning of

counter-signing he was on leave the following week.

The Electoral Commission

Minutes of the Executive Team meeting

27 May 2008

Present:

Clare Ettinghausen (CE) (Chair)	Deputy Chief Executive
Stephen Rooney (SR)	Director of Communication
Carolyn Hughes (CH)	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Andrew Scallan (AS)	Director of Electoral Administration and Boundaries

In attendance:

Katharine Sparrow (KS)	Minutes
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1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Peter Wardle (PW) and Lisa Klein (LK).

2. Commission meeting draft agenda June and July

2.1 Executive Team reviewed the draft agenda for the Commission meetings in June and July.

2.2 Executive Team agreed it would be beneficial for Alex Robertson and Vera Markos to meet to discuss Commission stakeholder events.

2.3 CE said Natalie Sayer was investigating the idea of a joint Executive Team/Management Team planning session before the summer, and SY and Vera Markos were thinking about a strategic planning away day for Commissioners and Executive Team in October.

3. Parliamentary Advisory Group meeting

3.1 The Parliamentary Advisory Group were due to meet on 3 June. SY was drafting a note on the examination project for circulation; this would then be used as the basis of a paper for Commissioners.

4. Building works update

4.1 CH said the temporary reception was due to close at the end of the week. The new reception would open the following week, but would not be fully operational until later in the year.

5. Nick Herbert meeting

- 5.1 PW and SY were due to meet Nick Herbert on 10 June. SR suggested individual registration would be a good topic for discussion.

6. Any other business

Annual Report

- 6.1 SR said the draft Annual Report had been circulated to Executive Team for review; he would be happy to discuss any comments from colleagues. The draft Report would then go to SY to review, before being circulated to Commissioners.

Resources

- 6.2 CH said Executive Team would need discussion on resources in the near future. The 2007-08 accounts were almost finalised, and she had asked Tony Summers to review the financial plans for the current year. It was suggested it would be useful for Executive Team to review its base line commitments and do some more scenario planning. It was also agreed it would be useful for Executive Team to review the Salaries budget.

New Chair

- 6.3 SR said he would speak to Steve Priestly at the Speaker's Committee about the handling of the announcement of the new Chair.

Freedom of Information

- 6.4 CE said she would circulate by email the proposed new handling Fol procedures.