The
Electoral
Commission

Corporate plan
2016–17 to 2020–21

HC 10

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Foreword

The Electoral Commission is the independent elections watchdog for the United Kingdom. This plan sets out our priorities over the next five years. We work to put voters first and to ensure trust, participation and no undue influence in elections and political finance across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

It is now 15 years since the Electoral Commission was established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. As an organisation, we have consistently worked to adapt to the changing nature of politics and campaigning, the way electors expect to engage with the political process and the need to deliver budget savings. It's now right, however, that we take stock to make sure that we are as prepared as we can be not only to react to, but to lead, the next generation of change.

We therefore plan to conduct a full strategic review of what we do, why we do it and how we deliver our work so that we can achieve this. We will use the review to ensure that we are constantly striving to be, and seen to be, a world class public sector organisation that innovates, leads and delivers. By achieving this, we can ensure that voters continue to have trust and confidence in our electoral processes and our party funding regime for the next 15 years and beyond.

Looking back: 2015 – 16

Our significant achievements over the last 12 months have included:

- **April to May 2015:** We published six pre-poll donations and loans reports at the UK Parliamentary General Election in which political parties and non-party campaigners had to report any donations or loans over £7,500. In total, details of almost £14.4 million worth of donations to political parties were published. The Commission's improved Party Election Finance database has made it even easier to search donations and we have continued to strive for greater transparency in our publications by using new tools to better enable the sharing of information on social media platforms.

- **May 2015:** Following the publication of our comprehensive suite of guidance, Commission staff supported this by responding to a significant number of enquiries from Returning Officers (ROs), members of the public, candidates, parties and non-party campaigners in the lead up and on polling day at the UK Parliamentary General Election. We partnered with Facebook who ran their 'I'm a Voter' button in which users could share with their friends and family that they had voted at the election. This partnership led to over 600,000 visits to our voter-facing website aboutmyvote. co.uk where voters could get more information about the election.

- **June 2015:** We published our analysis of the May 2015 electoral registers which found that there had been a 1% increase on the February/March 2014 registers – the last published under the old household system. The analysis of the May 2015 registers formed part of the Commission's recommendation to Parliament as to whether the end of the transition to Individual Electoral Registration (IER) should be brought forward to December 2015, or whether it should remain December 2016 as originally legislated for. We recommended that the end of the transition

should remain December 2016, partly because of the range of important elections scheduled to take place in May 2016. However, the Government and Parliament decided to bring forward the end of the transition to December 2015.

- **June 2015:** We published our report on the regulation of campaigners at the Scottish Independence Referendum. We found that the regulatory framework worked well overall and we ensured that our briefings to Parliament on the European Union Referendum Bill (now an Act) contained the recommendations from our report.

- **July 2015:** We reported to the UK Parliament on the UK Parliamentary General Election. Nine in ten people surveyed said the elections were well-run. We also published a review of public awareness activity conducted by the Commission and other organisations ahead of the elections. We reported that there had been 2.6 million applications to register to vote during the Commission's six week public awareness campaign which led to over 1.5 million additions to the registers. We also reported that there were 106,000 overseas electors on the registers at May 2015, three times the number that were on the registers ahead of the 2010 General Election. We also held the Four Countries Conference which brought together our counterparts from Canada, New Zealand and Australia to share learning, best practice, insights and expertise, and look at the opportunities and challenges in the years ahead.

- **July – December 2015:** the Board established a group of Commissioners to look at the implications for the Commission of further devolution of powers on elections to Scotland and Wales. Following this work, the Board agreed to increased decision-making authority to the Heads of the Electoral Commission in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and to set up new advisory groups in Scotland and Wales.

- **August 2015:** We launched a campaign in Scotland to encourage 15-17 year olds to register to vote ahead of the May 2016 Scottish Parliament election, following the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds for these elections for the first time. Following analysis of the May 2015 elections, we also submitted further evidence to the Law Commissions' consultation of electoral law, building on our original submission response in March 2015.

- **September – December 2015:** We gave our statutory advice to Parliament on the proposed referendum question in the European Union Referendum Bill. We recommended that the original question contained in the Bill be amended and the UK Government and Parliament agreed with our recommendation. We briefed the UK Parliament at all stages of the Bill's progress, assisting Parliament in making important changes to the final legislation that will help us deliver this historic poll effectively. When the European Union Referendum Act received Royal Assent in December, we issued a statement of readiness to Parliament giving our views on the state of preparations for the poll. In September, we also published a paper on legislative issues that arose in our work relating to the May 2015 elections to feed into the Law Commissions' review of electoral law.

- **October – December 2015:** We published guidance for parties, non-party campaigners and candidates in preparation for the May 2016 polls, and guidance for ROs on planning for and delivering the May elections.

- **November 2015:** Following a period of consultation, we confirmed the Chief Counting Officer (COO)'s approach to managing the referendum. This included confirmation that the count processes must be carried out overnight, polling stations should not have more than 2,500 electors allocated to them, and arrangements must be put in place to ensure that overseas and UK postal ballot packs are issued in good time.

- **December 2015:** We published detailed proposals for how a system where voters in Great Britain are required to produce a form of photo ID at polling stations could work in practice.

- **January 2016:** We launched our Strategic Review which focuses on what our role should, or could be, by 2020. We have started talking to external stakeholders – including political parties, electoral administrators and many others – alongside staff and Commissioners. We plan to

conclude our consultation in autumn 2016, with the aim of producing a report later in 2016. We also published the first stage of our guidance for campaigners and the Chief Counting Officer's guidance to Counting Officers for the Referendum in the UK membership of the EU.

- **February 2016:** We published our report on electoral registers in Great Britain which provided an analysis following the publication of the electoral registers on 1 December 2015. Our analysis found that the size of the parliamentary electorate in Great Britain on 1 December 2015 was 43,478,635. We also published details of spending by political parties at the 2015 UK General Election.

- **February 2016:** Together with National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead on election-related crime, we jointly hosted the annual seminar for police force Single Point of Contact Officers (SPOCs). This provided briefing and training on procedures for detecting and preventing electoral fraud. We also held a pre-election Electoral Integrity Roundtable to discuss current issues around preventing, detecting and dealing with electoral fraud and the Law Commissions' review of electoral law.

- **Throughout 2016** – We have received, analysed and published information about party donations and campaign spending at elections.

- We have advised those we regulate on how to comply with the law and what the rules mean for their campaigning plans, and monitored compliance with the law and dealt with possible breaches of the rules.

- The UK Electoral Advisory Board (EAB) met regularly throughout the year. It provided input and advice on a range of electoral issues, including the Law Commissions' review of electoral law, individual electoral registration, electoral management (including the potential for the further use of technology), and performance standards. In March 2016, the EAB agreed to merge with the Elections Policy and Co-ordination Group to become the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Group (ECAG) to reduce duplication and share best practice.

- In preparation for the EU referendum, the Chief Counting Officer (the Chair of the Commission) established the EU Referendum Management Board, comprised of regional counting officers, which met in parallel with the EAB.

- We published details, each quarter, of a total of £66.9 million accepted by political parties in donations during 2015 (2014: £66 million). We continued to promote the use of PEF Online (our online database for political parties' and other campaigners' income and spending) with political parties.

Looking Forward: 2016-17 to 2020-21

Over the course of this Corporate Plan, a number of key events such as local government elections, Assembly and Parliamentary elections and the EU Referendum will take place. Our priority projects over the next five years include:

- **A referendum on membership of the European Union and Parliamentary and Assembly elections**
  We will deliver the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union on 23 June 2016. Our planning for the delivery of a well-run poll is well-advanced, but this will be a significant feature of our work over the next year and beyond. Further details are set out on page 20.

- **Law Commissions review of electoral law**
  We expect the concluded review of electoral law by the Law Commissions of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to result in implementation of recommendations by governments which will fundamentally rationalise and modernise electoral law and will deliver democratic and economic benefits. Further details are set out on page 28.

- **Vision for electoral registration**
  We must all recognise that we exist in an increasingly digital world. Following the General Election, the Minister for Constitutional Reform launched his vision for electoral registration and how it can be modernised so that it meets the demands and expectations of 21st century voters. We support the Minister's commitment and have already made our own recommendations to improve electoral registration, but we continue to explore other ways we can support this work. In Scotland, electoral registration will be devolved for Scottish Parliament and local government and as such, we will continue to work with the Scottish Government to modernise registration. In the meantime, the accuracy and completeness of the registers will also continue to be a big focus of our work over the course of this Corporate Plan. In summer 2016 we will publish an in-depth analysis of the December 2015 registers. Our public awareness campaigns will focus on under-represented groups including students, homeowners and UK citizens living aboard.

- **Electoral Fraud**
  We will continue to work with Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), ROs and police forces, to improve confidence in the integrity of elections, and look forward to the publication of the review of electoral fraud led by the UK Government's anti-corruption champion Sir Eric Pickles. Further details are set out on page 25.

- **Strategic Review**
  We will conclude our strategic review of what we do, why we do it and how we will deliver our work. We plan to produce a report with key recommendations, supported by a strategic work plan, in 2016.

Our current Chair's eight year tenure will end in December 2016. For the remainder of this Corporate Plan, we will therefore have a new Chair in place to lead our strategic and operational priorities.

We have set out on pages 18-33 of this plan further information on how we will achieve these key priorities, alongside other areas we expect to focus on between now and 2021. In line with other publicly funded bodies we have delivered substantial cost efficiencies in recent years including a 34% (£5.4m) real term reduction in the core budget since 2010. We will continue to explore opportunities for further reductions in our future planning and operations.

We would not have achieved the successes of the past year, nor will we be able to achieve what this plans sets out, without the support of the staff that we employ and the other organisations we work with. We are proud that our staff, and colleagues across the electoral community, have responded positively to the challenges to date and we look forward to facing the challenges and opportunities to come.

Claire Bassett
Chief Executive

Jenny Watson
Chair

Our purpose, role and principles

Our role

We play a key role in elections and referendums that take place across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. As part of our role, we:

- run electoral registration campaigns
- provide advice and guidance to political parties, third parties, candidates and agents, ROs, EROs and police forces*
- set and monitor performance standards for ROs and EROs in England, Scotland and Wales.
- publish returns relating to the funding of parties and their expenditure during elections
- investigate allegations of non-compliance with the party and election finance rules
- report on the administration of elections
- provide advice to the United Kingdom's parliaments and legislative assemblies on legislation relating to elections and referendums
- authorise people and organisations to observe elections
- are responsible for the administration and conduct of referendums
- keep our governance structures under review given the further devolution of powers on elections to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales.

Our approach

We are committed to the United Kingdom's strong tradition of **free elections**, which are an essential part of a **healthy democracy**.

We:

- work to **serve the people** of the United Kingdom
- are committed to **protecting and promoting** democracy
- put **voters first**

We will **seek change** where the evidence shows that it is needed to serve the people of the United Kingdom, and their democracy, better.

Our **principles** for free elections that support a healthy democracy

- **Trust:** people should be able to trust the way our elections and our political finance system work

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* The Commission does not provide advice and guidance for local government elections in Northern Ireland.

- **Participation:** it should be straightforward for people to participate in our elections and our political finance system, whether voting or campaigning; and people should be confident that their vote counts

- **No undue influence:** there should be no undue influence in the way our elections and our political finance system work

Our **objectives** for free elections that support a healthy democracy

1) Well-run elections, referendums and electoral registration

We want people throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to be confident that:

- registering to vote and taking part in elections is straightforward, accessible and secure
- they will receive a consistently high quality of service, wherever they live and whichever elections or referendums are being held.

2) Transparency in party and election finance, with high levels of compliance

We want people throughout the United Kingdom to be confident that:

- there is transparency about party and election finance, so that people know where money comes from and how it is spent
- people who want to stand for election, and people and organisations that want to campaign at elections, can easily find out how to get involved, what the rules are and what they need to do to comply with those rules
- the rules on party and election finance are followed, and those who do not follow them are dealt with appropriately and effectively
- political parties, candidates and campaigners can participate in elections without unnecessary barriers

Looking forward to 2021

In the period covered by this Corporate Plan leading up to 2021, we expect to see a number of important changes that will benefit voters and improve the operation of our democracy, following work by ourselves and our partners.

Well-run elections, referendums and electoral registration

In delivering **our objective of well-run elections, referendums and electoral registration** we envisage that by 2021 there will have been many changes in the electoral environment, some of the most significant being that:

- we will have delivered a referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union.
- electoral law has been significantly simplified following the work of the Law Commissions
- there is a continued focus on accuracy and completeness of electoral registers, which will be facilitated by online registration and other moves to ensure accessibility within a more secure system
- the ECAG and the Commission will, by the next UK Parliamentary election, have developed a vision for electoral services which covers:
  - a modern registration and polling process designed around the voter, striking the right balance between accessibility and security
  - use of technology in the administration of electoral registration and elections
  - the costs of electoral administration, and
  - training, guidance, support and performance monitoring for EROs, ROs and their teams

To support the delivery of well-run elections, referendums and electoral registration in the period to 2021 we plan to:

- Continue to report on:
  - the administration of major polls
  - campaign spending at major polls
  - the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers
  - allegations and cases of electoral fraud
- Be ready to act at a referendum in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act whenever held across the United Kingdom.
- Continue to scrutinise new electoral legislation and provide expert briefings to both governments and Parliaments/Assemblies on legislative proposals.

- Provide guidance for EROs and ROs and their teams. Over time, we expect most users of the Commission's guidance to access it on screen, and it will be designed and provided in web and mobile-enabled format. We will also continue to offer tailored advice where appropriate.

- Set performance standards for EROs and ROs that focus on the outcomes achieved rather than the detail of how they should be delivered, recognising the importance of local knowledge and experience while still ensuring that agreed minimum standards are achieved.

- Monitor performance against the standards using a proportionate, risk-based approach, focused on supporting all EROs and ROs to meet the standards.

- Work with the ECAG and other partners to provide more support for new EROs, ROs, Police Area ROs and Regional ROs, and for new Police SPOCs.

- Provide integrated, user-friendly guidance to candidates and agents, which we will develop in consultation with political parties and candidates more widely, and with EROs/ROs and the police.

- Continue to facilitate co-ordinated work between EROs and ROs and the police to deter, prevent and detect attempted electoral fraud.

- Deliver innovative and excellent value for money public awareness campaigns and resources for others to use. Our campaigns will focus on encouraging people to register to vote and ensuring they know how to cast their vote. We will continue to take seriously the implications of declining/low turnout at elections or referendums, and increase the work we do to support organisations and individuals best placed to tackle public disengagement.

- Use solid research as the basis for our public awareness work and for accessible and user-friendly voter materials for use in electoral registration and in voting. In doing this we will increasingly apply 'behavioural insights' to our external communications to test which material produces the best response.

- Continue, in all our work, to consult widely with others, including Parliamentary Parties Panel/Assembly Parties Panel, ECAG and Working Group, The Electoral Management Board for Scotland, Parliamentarians, campaigners, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), Association of Electoral Administrators, Scottish Assessors Association, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Welsh Local Government Association, the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, the Local Government Association, National Police Chiefs' Council, Police Scotland, Police Service in Northern Ireland, Crown Prosecution Service, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland.

Transparency in party and election finance, with high levels of compliance

In delivering **our objective of transparency in party and election finance, with high levels of compliance** the community we regulate in relation to party and election finance is larger now, following the changes in 2014 to the rules regulating non-party campaigners ahead of elections. We envisage the scale and nature of the regulated community in the second half of this decade to cover:

- around 450 registered political parties (most regulatory time will be spent on the larger parties, which will between them continue to receive and spend the vast majority of money in UK politics; in the period some medium-size parties may gain in political significance)

- campaigners of all sizes, both party and non-party, which will continue to rely heavily on volunteers

- increased numbers of non-party campaigners

In addition we expect:

- subject to Parliamentary support, many political parties having streamlined reporting and compliance requirements following implementation of the Commission's Party and Election Finance Regulatory Review recommendations.

To support the delivery of transparency in party and election finance, with high levels of compliance in the period to 2021 we plan to:

- Maintain guidance documents for the whole regulated community, and offer tailored advice where appropriate. We plan to start exploring the requirements for implementing online guidance that is responsive to the needs of stakeholders and optimises our external communication, including digital reporting for parties and non-party campaigners.

- Increasingly regulate during electoral and referendum periods by 'real time' monitoring of campaigning and intervention to achieve compliance with the rules.

- Publicise clearly levels of regulatory action we take and provide increased detail on the conduct and conclusions of individual investigations where this might deter or prevent non-compliance.

- Ensure that data on party and election finance is readily available in formats that users can readily interpret, and clearly presented to members of the public and the media.

- Maintain the regular reporting of donations and spending, and annual statements of accounts, by those we regulate. The reporting process will as far as possible be online, and we will aim to minimise the cost and bureaucracy involved in making the necessary checks to ensure the accuracy of what is reported to and published by the Commission.

- Have a pro-active programme of auditing party and campaigner procedures and practices to assist them in readily complying with the rules on party and election finance.

- Recommend improvements to the legislative framework for party and election finance based on our experience and on wider developments. While we do not plan to initiate significant reviews of potential wider changes to the system, we will identify principles for the UK's party funding and regulatory framework against which we can scrutinise proposed legislation. We will also offer expert briefing to governments and Parliaments or Assemblies on the proposals and their implications for the Commission's regulatory work.

To enable all this, we will ensure that:

- we make maximum use of information and communications technology (ICT) and will manage our information and knowledge effectively

- supporting services across the Commission will be modern and efficient and focused on helping staff do their work as effectively as possible

- we equip our managers to get the best from everyone in the Commission and continue to encourage and inspire staff to deliver the Commission's vision for 2020.

Challenges, priorities, plans and measurement

This section highlights the key challenges that we face over the period of this plan and sets out the external context and environment in which we work.

In each section, we set out our priorities for the next five-year period. These priorities have been developed and agreed within the context of the current and expected future resource constraints - a significant challenge across the UK public sector.

We have also developed targets to support us in achieving our priorities. Appendices **1-3** provide additional information about targets, measurement and potential barriers to achievement.

Participating in elections and referendums

Elections and referendums across the United Kingdom run smoothly. Where problems arise they are generally isolated and are taken seriously, lessons are learnt and action is taken. We highlight any significant issues through our post-event reports, along with any appropriate recommendations for change. Our approach of on-going support and intervention for those running elections helps ensure any problems are kept to a minimum. In our most recent survey 66% of the UK public said they were confident that elections are well run. We asked any who were not confident what would help to increase confidence. The improvement that was most popular was "People being required to show some form of photographic identification at their polling station" with 69% of respondents (in Great Britain) saying that would help improve their confidence a little or a lot.*

We also ask about the public's satisfaction with the process of voting and 68% said they were satisfied. Of those not satisfied we asked why, and it is clear that many of the reasons do not relate directly to administrative issues and include dissatisfaction with the voting system and negative perceptions of politics and politicians.

The challenges facing all of those involved in delivering successful elections in the coming years will, however, be significant, and should not be underestimated.

In the period covered by this plan there will be several significant polls:

• 2016 (May) – Assembly/Parliamentary elections in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, London Assembly and Mayoral elections, local government elections in England and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales

• 2016 (June) – Referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union

• 2017 – local government elections in England, Scotland and Wales, election for a directly elected metro-wide Mayor for Greater Manchester

• 2018 – local government elections in England

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* For further information see the Winter tracker data on our website at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-work/ our-research/public-opinion-surveys

- 2019 – European Parliament, English local government and Northern Ireland local government elections
- 2020 – UK Parliament Election, London Assembly and Mayoral elections, local government elections in England and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales

In addition, the implementation of major changes to the registration system in Great Britain, which began in 2014 and concluded in December 2015, took place in the context of significant pressures on both central and local government budgets and any future electoral registration work will take place in the same challenging financial context, as will the running of elections.

Despite well-run polls, a significant proportion of people do not vote, although this varies with different elections and the turnout at the referendum on Scottish independence illustrates what can happen when an issue engages people. There is a need for more discussion about the reasons for the long-term decline in turnout and what can be done to address the problem. The Commission will participate in this debate and continue to use its' public awareness campaigns to make sure people are registered to vote and have enough information to cast their vote with confidence.

We want to ensure that:

- elections and referendums are well run, and people are confident they know what the polls are about, and how to cast their vote successfully
- people are confident that their postal vote will be received in time by the RO and included in the count
- materials used by electors to register to vote, or cast their vote, are consistently designed to a high standard
- there is understanding of why people do and do not cast their vote, and what changes could be made to remove any practical or information barriers to participation in elections

Key activity 2016-17 to 2020-21

EU Referendum – The EU referendum will be held on 23 June 2016. We have specific responsibilities for referendums that include:

- Commenting on the intelligibility of the referendum question (we reported on this in September 2015)
- Running a public awareness campaign to make sure everyone has the information they need to participate
- Registering organisations or individuals who want to campaign in the referendum
- Considering and approving applications for designation as the lead campaign group for each referendum outcome
- Making grant payments to the approved designated organisations
- Monitoring spending on referendum campaigning, in line with the referendum spending limits
- Providing advice and guidance on the rules to campaigners
- Monitoring and securing compliance with campaign donation, loan and spending controls
- Reporting on the administration of the referendum and referendum campaign regulation

The Chair of the Commission will be the Chief Counting Officer (CCO) for the referendum and will be responsible for certifying the outcome of the referendum. A well-run referendum which produces a result that voters and campaigners can have confidence in is underpinned by a clear and certain legal framework. Good legislation provides clarity about the roles and responsibilities

of those administering the referendum and sets out fair rules governing campaign spending and fundraising.

We are pleased that the UK Government incorporated in the EU Referendum Act 2015 many of our previous recommendations for changes to the legislative framework for referendums, based on our reports on referendums held in 2011 and 2014.

Arrangements for the delivery of a well-run referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union are well-advanced and we are ready to deliver a successful referendum.

As the EU Referendum is a major project for us over the early years of this Corporate Plan, we have developed specific Key Performance Measures (KPMs) to track our activity and progress. The KPMs focus on key areas of activity such as increasing the number of overseas electors on the register and delivering a well-run referendum.

Elections – The Commission works to ensure well-run elections across the United Kingdom. As part of this programme we provide guidance and support to ROs and candidates and agents; develop and monitor performance standards for ROs; monitor work to ensure the integrity of the electoral process; run campaigns to ensure people know how to register and cast their vote; and report on the administration of elections and referendums. We also ensure compliance with rules on spending by candidates, parties and other campaigners. Our elections programme also encompasses the work that we undertake in any given year on any new or emerging events.

We are also undertaking work to ensure accessibility for all for elections. We want everyone to be able to participate in elections without facing any undue barriers.

Candidates and agents guidance – Our on-going work aims to ensure that published guidance is available at least six weeks before the start of the regulated period for relevant elections. We want to ensure that candidates and agents have access to clear and helpful guidance to help them understand the rules on standing for election and election spending and donations.

Electoral registration

The move, in Great Britain, from household registration to IER – the biggest change to our electoral system since the introduction of the universal franchise – began in the summer of 2014 and concluded in December 2015. We reported in October and November 2014 on the results of the confirmation live run – the first phase of the change – and again in February 2015 and then June 2015, giving our assessment of overall progress with delivering the transition to those points. A report on the transition and an assessment against our performance standards for EROs, which were put in place to support this change, was published in February 2016, and a more detailed report on accuracy and completeness will be published in 2016.

The most important goal for the Electoral Commission is that the UK's electoral registers support and enable effective participation in elections and referendums by all those who want to take part. We also recognise, however, that electoral registers may continue to be used for other purposes, including determining the distribution and boundaries of parliamentary constituencies and other electoral areas. We will continue to publish robust estimates of the accuracy and completeness of the UK's electoral registers, but it would be for governments and legislatures to consider how best to use electoral data in any future boundary revision exercise.

We will continue to monitor the electoral register in Northern Ireland following the largely successful canvass in 2013.

We want to ensure that:

- People who want to take part in elections can register to vote or update their registration details as easily as possible
- Electoral registration continues to be delivered in a way that enables effective participation in elections and referendums
- The accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers across the UK is improved, especially immediately before polls take place
- Good practice in electoral registration is shared across the electoral community

Across the electoral community there is a widely shared goal of enabling all eligible people to be able to participate in elections and so we all aim to see 100% accuracy and completeness of the UK's electoral registers. However, recognising that there will always be population movement between registers at any given point in time, it is difficult to envisage that accuracy and completeness of greater than 98% is attainable.

We have not set a specific performance measure for the Commission of progress towards such a target, recognising that there are currently a number of structural and behavioural barriers to accurate and complete electoral registers which are likely to be outside the Commission's direct control. We intend to work with the wider electoral community, including EROs, governments and legislatures, and campaigners, to ensure these barriers are understood and to identify the actions required to remove them.

Key activity 2016-17 to 2020-2021

Electoral Registration – We will continue to support the 363* EROs and their teams with their electoral registration activity. We will work with EROs and other stakeholders to identify and share examples of good practice and will reflect these in our package of guidance and support for EROs.

A new set of performance standards were laid before Parliament in March 2016 and we will monitor EROs' performance against these standards, providing targeted support where required to support EROs in being able to deliver the outcomes set out in the standards.

The range of polls scheduled for 2016 means that everywhere in the UK will have elections on 5 May 2016 and we would want to be satisfied that registration is managed so as to maximise participation in these elections.

Maximising registration – The most recent reports we published, in July 2014, on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers found that Great Britain's electoral registers are approximately 85-86% complete. Previous research by the Commission had estimated that the registers in England and Wales in 2000 were between 91% and 92% complete and that the registers in Great Britain in 2010 were 85% complete. Therefore, following a decline in registration between 2001 and 2010, levels of registration have stabilised since 2011.

Based on this research, the Commission has estimated that around 7.5 million individuals were not correctly registered at their current address in Great Britain at the time of the research.

In our previous research on the December 2010 electoral registers we said that between 13-15% were not correctly registered, which we estimated to be at least 6 million people. Data from the census allowed us to make a more accurate estimate of registration levels in 2011. This showed that registration levels were at the lower end of the range we identified previously and that 15% of people – or approximately 7.5 million - were not correctly registered in December 2010.

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* Figure correct as at February 2016.

The research also confirmed our earlier findings about the groups of people least likely to be registered and reinforced the need for EROs to target their efforts at recent home movers, young people and certain Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities.   We will run innovative, fully evaluated, public awareness campaigns targeted at these groups ahead of each major sets of polls. We will also continue to work with and provide support and resources to organisations, groups and individuals who are already working hard to promote voter registration. Ahead of the May 2016 polls we have strengthened our plans to have an even greater focus than previously planned on students and home-movers because of the early end of transition to IER. From our research we are aware that these two groups are most likely to have been affected by the end of transition to IER.

We will report in July 2016 on the accuracy and completeness of the registers in Great Britain after the transition to IER. This report will also include an assessment of the register in Northern Ireland.

Service voters – We will continue to work with the Ministry of Defence to make sure service voters are registered and able to participate in each set of elections and referendums.

Overseas electors – We will continue our work to encourage overseas electors** to register by using public awareness campaigns in advance of the EU Referendum, the 2019 European Parliament election and the 2020 UK general election. We will also work with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the overseas offices of political parties, a range of partners with links to the expatriate community and others to help encourage registration.

Changes to the franchise for elections or referendums – We will continue to advise and support governments and legislatures across the UK in considering proposals to change the franchise for future elections and referendums. Ahead of the May 2016 elections, we have undertaken additional public awareness work in Scotland aimed at 15-17 year olds, as this will be the first time they are eligible to vote in the Scottish Parliament election. We have worked with the Scottish and UK governments and EROs in Scotland to help identify and resolve the practical challenges of implementing a change to allow 16 and 17 year olds to register and vote in the May 2016 Scottish Parliament election. We will also monitor the Government's commitment to introduce legislation on votes for life for overseas electors.

Modernisation and further improvements to electoral registration – We have welcomed the development by the Minister for Constitutional Reform of a vision for the future of electoral registration, and we will continue to identify and highlight new ways to improve the service provided to electors.

We will evaluate any electoral registration pilot schemes which take place in 2016 and 2017, and identify any learning that can be used to inform further improvements to the registration system. We will continue to identify opportunities for more significant changes which will support improved services for people who want to register to vote as easily and simply as possible. We will draw on the experience of comparable democracies elsewhere in the world who face similar challenges, learning and sharing best practice. We will also identify lessons from the modernisation of public services elsewhere in the UK which could be applied to improve electoral registration.

We will continue to work with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to support the introduction of online registration for electors in Northern Ireland by autumn 2016.

** Overseas electors refers to British citizens living abroad who meet certain conditions and are eligible to register to vote in the United Kingdom.

Electoral fraud

Electoral fraud is a serious issue where it takes place, and we will continue to work with ROs, EROs, police forces and campaigners to ensure robust and effective arrangements are in place to prevent, detect and deal with it, particularly in areas where there has been a history of allegations of electoral fraud and where there may be a higher risk of allegations in future.

We want to ensure that people's concerns about vulnerabilities in how our elections are run are addressed, including ensuring that effective measures to prevent electoral fraud and robust plans for detecting and dealing with attempts to manipulate the results of elections are in place.

Although there is no evidence that electoral fraud is widespread in the United Kingdom, and the number of cases of alleged electoral fraud reported to the police is relatively low compared with the number of contests and the number of people who vote in elections each year, there is a consistent level of public concern about electoral fraud. Our public opinion research shows that around one-third of people think electoral fraud is a problem.*

The successful introduction of IER from 2014 has improved the security and integrity of the electoral register, but other key elements of the electoral process remain heavily dependent on trust. Our review of electoral fraud identified the need to address the vulnerability of polling station voting to fraud by impersonation. We recommended that electors should in future be required to show proof of their identity before they can be issued with a ballot paper at polling stations for elections and referendums in Great Britain, as they are already in Northern Ireland and many other countries.

Although neither the UK Government nor the Scottish Government have yet responded to our January 2014 recommendation for a proof of identity scheme for voters at polling stations, we published our proposals and costings for an implementation model in December 2015. We will continue to work with the UK and Scottish Government to develop legislative proposals for a scheme which could be introduced for approval by the UK and Scottish Parliament in time to be used by no later than for the May 2019 elections.

Key activity 2016-17 to 2020-21

Electoral fraud – We welcome the review of electoral fraud which was announced in August 2015 and has been led by the UK Government's anti-corruption Sir Eric Pickles. We will continue to work with EROs, ROs and police forces, to improve confidence in the integrity of elections, and look forward to the publication of the review of electoral fraud.

We will continue to ensure that robust strategies are in place for preventing electoral fraud, as well as dealing effectively with cases of alleged electoral fraud if they are made. We will target our work to ensure that every effort is made to reduce opportunities for electoral fraud in areas with a history of allegations of electoral fraud and where there may be a higher risk of allegations in future. We will continue to encourage campaigners to follow the Code of Conduct for Campaigners in Great Britain, which we have developed in consultation with political parties, ROs and police forces.

Electoral framework

People across the United Kingdom expect and deserve a consistent service in electoral registration, elections and referendums. While there is broad agreement on the standards that should be achieved by all those responsible for providing these services, accountability is fragmented and in many cases no one is able to intervene to ensure these standards are met. This issue needs to be addressed for electoral registration, referendums and all types of elections across the United

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* For further information see the Winter tracker data on our website at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-work/
  our-research/public-opinion-surveys

Kingdom, and we will continue to work with the ECAG to maintain a shared understanding of what makes for good electoral management. Our performance standards have been endorsed by the EAB and we will continue our work on identifying, recognising and sharing good practice.

The United Kingdom's electoral legislation is fragmented, inconsistent and not up to date. We will work with the Law Commissions to support their project to review and modernise the structure of the legislative framework. There is also significant inconsistency in the rules about standing as a candidate for different elections (deposits, subscribers, disqualification).

We want to ensure that:

- Voters and candidates are confident that count processes are designed and managed to secure accurate results, quickly and transparently.
- It is straightforward for people to stand as a candidate for elections and the rules by which they do this inspire public confidence and trust.
- There is clearer accountability for how elections are run, whether that accountability is achieved by a single individual (e.g. Regional Returning Officers at European Parliament elections or the Greater London Returning Officer) or through the Commission's performance standards framework.
- There is a shared commitment across the electoral community to the key principles of maintaining trust, supporting participation and ensuring no undue influence.
- There is good progress on a review of elections legislation by the Law Commissions.

Key activity 2016-17 to 2020-21

Law Commissions review of electoral law project – The Law Commissions have published their interim review setting out their recommendations for electoral law reform. This is a key stage of the review process and we will be making the case to ensure that the review continues to the next stage and results in a simpler and clearer legal framework. This will include work to demonstrate the real benefit of a simplified legal framework. We will continue to provide guidance and assistance to the Law Commissions in their development of draft legislation, which we expect to be published in 2017. The drafting proceeding and implementation is subject to approvals by governments. If this happens it will result in changes, including a need for a complete review of the guidance we provide and identification of the best way to ensure that the changes are embedded.

Amended legislation would benefit all those involved in administering elections, those standing for election and, most importantly, those wishing to cast their vote. Every respondent to the Law Commission's consultation, including us, agreed that the law surrounding elections needs to be reviewed and brought up to date. It is not enough to consolidate the different pieces of electoral law, they need modernising and simplifying. The review has the potential to really improve voters' experience, helping to deliver elections in a way befitting a 21st century democracy.

Standing for elections – In January 2015 we reported on our project to examine the case for modernising and simplifying the rules on standing for election to the benefit of candidates and ROs alike, and to deliver an agreed common set of principles that ensures equity and fairness of treatment among those standing for election. Moving forward we will work to ensure that our recommendations for change attract cross-party support, and that plans for implementing the recommendations are delivered, conducting further consultation or research where necessary.

Performance standards – We will keep under review our risk-based approach to monitoring, which sees less emphasis on checking that all ROs are achieving a certain minimum level of performance where we have no reason to believe that this wouldn't be the case, and a focus on working with

individual ROs to ensure that support can be provided where needed to enable the provision of a high-quality service to voters and those standing for election.

For elections taking place in 2016, we will monitor statutory office holders with power of direction under performance standard 3 (Co-ordination and management of the poll). Where there is no such statutory officer holder role we will monitor local returning officer performance against standards 1 and 2.

Single Transferable Vote Counts in Northern Ireland - During 2015-16 we led a project to assess ways to make the Single Transferable Vote (STV) counts in Northern Ireland more efficient. We published a set of recommendations in February 2016. We will work with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland on reflecting these recommendations in future STV counts.

Ensuring voters can see how politicians and campaigners raise and spend money

Voters should be able to see how political parties and campaigners are funded and what they spend on campaigning. To achieve this goal, there must continue to be clear, proportionate and effective rules on political finance, including for new elections and referendums that take place during the period of this plan.

We want to ensure that:

- it is easy for people to find out about how the political system is funded
- it is as easy as possible for people to comply with the rules, through good guidance and systems
- there is greater understanding of political parties' and non-party campaigners' funding and spending, drawing on comparable information from parties' annual statements of accounts
- there is more transparency about sources of donations and loans to political parties, regulated donees and other campaigners in Northern Ireland

Key activity 2016-17 to 2020-21

Delivering transparency – Our on-going work to deliver transparency includes timely and accurate publication of all statutory returns.

We publish the following on a regular basis:

- quarterly reports from political parties of their donations and borrowing
- annual political party statements of accounts
- annual statements of accounts for political party accounting units whose gross income or total expenditure exceeded £25,000
- monthly reports of donations and borrowing by regulated donees

In addition, we will publish as appropriate:

- weekly reports of donations and borrowing by political parties and campaigners during the period running up to a UK general election
- quarterly reports of donations and borrowing by campaigners in the period prior to the UK general election
- details of expenditure by political parties and campaigners at the elections taking place in May 2016
- details of expenditure by referendum campaigners

We also publish details of our regulatory actions in accordance with our disclosure policy.

We will continue to work with UK Government on the content of legislation to work towards delivering increased transparency of donations and loans in Northern Ireland.

Non-party campaigners – We aim to ensure that all those who may be regulated understand and are supported to comply with the law. Lord Hodgson was appointed by the UK Government to conduct a statutory review, which was published in March 2016, to see how well the regulatory system for non-party campaigning works. We are currently considering the key issues and proposals that have emerged from the review and look forward to setting out our views in due course.

Effective and efficient policy development grants – We will continue to refine our approach to managing the public funds awarded to help parties in developing policies to include in manifestos for elections. We will continue to ensure that there are appropriate controls over the distribution and use of public funds without creating unnecessary administrative burdens.

Standardising statement of accounts project – Following new legislative requirements brought in with the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 that cover statement of accounts for non-party campaigners, we will be implementing an approach to standardised statement of accounts for political parties.

Making the information that we hold more easily accessible – The introduction of Party Election Finance (PEF) Online has seen information on party and election finance being made available in a more accessible format. This has allowed increased scrutiny by those that use our information. We will continue to provide more information by making historic data available.

Good regulation

Those we regulate, both established parties and campaigners, and new entrants, must be clear about their responsibilities under the political finance system.

We will:

- support parties, candidates and campaigners who are seeking to comply with their statutory duties
- address examples of non-compliance, and use our powers on a proportionate basis to secure compliance
- ensure political finance is regulated effectively at (and between) elections and referendums by:
  - registering parties and campaigners, and giving them advice and guidance
  - checking and publishing information on funding and spending
  - dealing with concerns that the rules have been broken
- focus our regulatory efforts on the areas of highest risk, informed by our published risk assessments and the principles of good regulation

Key activity 2016-17 to 2020-21

Secure compliance – Our work to encourage compliance includes registering parties, publishing guidance that explains how to comply with the rules, offering advice in response to enquiries, and continuing to find ways to reach out to those we regulate to keep them informed of the rules and how to comply with them.

Investigating and dealing with non-compliance – We hold those who fail to comply with the rules to account. Our work includes dealing with allegations of offences relating to funding and spending by parties and campaigners, taking robust and proportionate action and imposing sanctions where appropriate. We also publish case outcome information and case reports following appropriate investigations. At the end of 2015 we consulted on a revised Enforcement Policy. The revised policy reflects our progression in this area since 2010 and sets a new framework for our investigations going forwards. It will be published in spring 2016.

Introducing regulations – The Commission will use its regulation-making powers to set common standards for party accounts.

Introducing online guidance – We want to use modern technology and communications to be as efficient as possible. 82% of the UK population is online and they have high expectations for what makes a good digital service and we need to meet those expectations. We will move to publishing our guidance digitally and will enable digital reporting for parties and non-party campaigners.

Improving the legislative framework on party and election finance

To ensure that the rules serve their purpose, there must continue to be clear, proportionate and effective rules on political finance.

In 2013, we published a review of the current rules on donations and campaign spending, which looked for opportunities to make the framework that the UK Parliament set in 2000 more effective, and to reduce administrative burdens. Some of the recommendations have since been introduced through election and referendum legislation by the UK and Scottish Governments, and we have worked to support their implementation.

Our priorities are that:

- Changes to the current rules on donations and spending, and rules for new elections and referendums, should be in the interests of voters, reflecting our experience of regulating the existing regime for over 10 years.
- Known problems with the current rules are dealt with in good time for upcoming elections and any wider changes are workable and introduced via a clear and realistic timetable.

Key activity 2016-17 to 2020-21

Legislative changes – we will continue to support and critique the introduction of new legislation on elections, referendums or other new electoral events.

Regulatory review – We will work with the UK Government and others to continue to drive the adoption of the 50 recommendations to improve the rules that we published in June 2013:

- Where we can make changes ourselves, we will reduce complexity and burdens while maintaining appropriate protections.
- Where changes require legislation, we will work with Parliaments and governments, and with those we regulate and others to promote workable and effective new rules.

Governance

As at 31 March 2016 the Commission's Board comprises of 10 Commissioners, one of whom is the Chair. All Commissioners are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Commission is accountable to the UK Parliament, and specifically to a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Independence is critical to public confidence in our effectiveness. We aim for a model of excellent corporate governance.

The Deregulation Act 2015 amended the basis of submission for Commission Corporate Plans. Under the new legislation, the Commission is required to produce a five-year plan in the first year of a new Parliament and thereafter as required by the Speaker's Committee.

The Speaker's Committee examines our five-year plan, and annual financial and forward resource estimates. One of its members also responds to questions in the House of Commons on matters relating to our work. The Speaker's Committee is responsible for the recruitment of Commissioners. Members of the Speaker's Committee are: Rt Hon John Bercow MP (Speaker, Chair of the Speaker's Committee), Mr Bernard Jenkin MP (Chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee), Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), Rt Hon Mark Francois MP (Minister of State for Communities and Resilience and Minister at the Department for Communities and Local Government), Rt Hon Sir Gerald Kaufman MP, Bridget Phillipson MP, Mr Gary Streeter MP, Jessica Morden MP and Pete Wishart MP.

The current Electoral Commissioners are: Jenny Watson (Chair), Anna Carragher, Gareth Halliwell, Tony Hobman, John Horam, David Howarth, John McCormick, Alasdair Morgan, Bridget Prentice and Rob Vincent CBE.

They are responsible for the work of the organisation and set our strategic direction. The tenures of our current Chair, Jenny Watson, and Electoral Commissioner, Scotland, John McCormick will end on 31 December 2016.

The executive team support Commissioners by providing day-to-day leadership to implement our corporate plan. The Commission's executive team members are: Claire Bassett (Chief Executive), Carolyn Hughes (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Services), Bob Posner (Director of Party and Election Finance and Legal Counsel), Alex Robertson (Director of Communication) and Andrew Scallan CBE (Director of Electoral Administration).

Implications of further devolution in Wales and Scotland

Responsibility for Scottish Parliament elections is transferring to the Scottish Parliament (local government elections are already their responsibility) and the draft Wales Bill has proposed that legislative competence for local government and Assembly elections be transferred to the National Assembly for Wales. The Commission has made clear that we are keen to be accountable for these

aspects of our work to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales and we will discuss with those bodies how this can best be achieved.

We will also keep our governance structure under review in the period covered by this corporate plan, and in 2016-17 we will set up new advisory groups in Scotland and Wales. At the same time we are giving increased decision-making authority to Heads of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and will continue to focus on these issues as power transfers to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales.

We publish full details of our performance each year in our annual report (which can be found on our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk).

Financial management

The Speaker's Committee has designated the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer of the Commission, and she is responsible for the propriety and regularity of expenditure, ensuring that proper accounting records are kept and that assets are safeguarded. The Accounting Officer duties also extend to control of the non-voted costs associated with delivery of the EU Referendum.

She is supported in this role by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and, through a system of delegated budgetary control, by her directors and senior managers.*

The Audit Committee, with advice from both internal and external audit, support the Accounting Officer in meeting her responsibilities.

Financial control procedures include monthly reporting of expenditure against financial plans and forecasts to the Executive Team, regular review of budgets by directors and their senior managers and programme board scrutiny and monitoring of programme budgets. Capital expenditure is controlled through the Infrastructure and Corporate Projects Board.

Effective financial management is critical to the achievement of operational objectives within the Commission. We aim to support effective decision making through the provision of timely and robust management information, ensuring the optimal use of resources in meeting the organisation's aims and objectives. We also look to minimise the overhead of financial management through the efficient use of technology and single source financial data.

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* Our corporate governance framework is available at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/how-we-are-run/
  governance

Costs of delivering this plan

Resource requirements for the period of this plan have been prepared in line with the principles established in previous years. The Commission has already made significant efficiency savings in people and overhead costs and will continue to absorb the impact of inflationary pressure within its core budgets. Our core spending plans will reduce by a further 10.4% in real terms over the plan period which means the Commission will have delivered savings of more than £7.3m or 41% in its underlying running costs during the period of public spending restraint since 2010-11. In addition to core cost reductions we have also identified efficiencies, particularly in the delivery of our public awareness campaigns that have allowed us to make equivalent reductions in our event related spend for the year.

A summary of projected expenditure for the period of this plan is at table 1. Our anticipated spending on the delivery of the European Referendum is shown in more detail at table 2. The projections reflect both the known electoral cycle and our commitment to maintain tight control over our core spending.

Table 1: Electoral Commission expenditure 2016-2017 to 2020–2021

Electoral Commission	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
£m					
Core expenditure	10.683	10.641	10.682	10.642	10.681
Event expenditure	4.290	2.068	2.486	3.382	3.520
EU Referendum	8.750	0.510			
Income	(1.010)	(0.666)	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Total running costs	22.713	12.553	13.152	14.005	14.182
Policy Development Grants	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000
Capital expenditure	0.310	0.370	0.250	0.250	0.250
Total spending plans	25.023	14.923	15.402	16.255	16.432

The resource budget is reported in four main categories – core costs including depreciation, event-related costs, policy development grants and capital expenditure to political parties.

Core costs fund the activities we will undertake regardless of the electoral cycle; this includes registering and monitoring the funding of political parties, supporting electoral administration and analysing performance standards and some elements of our research work. Core costs also include administrative expenditure on Commission support functions including accommodation, ICT and telephony.

In addition to our core costs we incur **event-related costs** each year, which vary according to the electoral cycle and other non-routine activity. For 2016-17 the event-related costs in the table above have been substantially increased as a result of the EU Referendum (see table 2). The event

expenditure includes the cost of activities undertaken on Scottish local government elections which are recharged to the Scottish Government and offset against income.

We continue to administer the **policy development grant** scheme which provides for grants to be paid to eligible political parties to assist in developing policies for inclusion in their manifestos. In spring 2015, we reviewed the scheme and consulted political parties and concluded that it still meets its original purpose.

Our **capital expenditure** relates to the operation and enhancement of existing Commission systems and infrastructure. Where capital needs are identified in excess of these amounts we would propose that funding be transferred from any savings in resource expenditure. The lease on our existing premises will expire in October 2020 and we will be considering options to meet future accommodation needs following the strategic review.

Further expenditure in the region of £0.25 million in **Commissioner Fees** and related expenses does not require annual Parliamentary authority and is instead funded directly from the consolidated fund. This amount is not included in the figures above.

Table 2: Electoral Commission expenditure on delivery of EU Referendum (£m)

EU Referendum	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Total
£m				
Public Awareness	1.068	5.434		6.502
Lead Campaigner Grants		1.200		1.200
CCO costs & Count event	0.245	0.405		0.650
Other delivery costs	0.337	1.711	0.510	2.558
Total	1.650	8.750	0.510	10.910

Expenditure is shown for the full three year period of expected activity. The breakdown of requirement between years is necessarily a best estimate of the timing of spend, reflecting a poll held in June 2016.

In addition to the expenditure in table 2 above, the non-voted costs incurred by Counting Officers and Regional Counting Officers in the delivery of the EU Referendum will be included in the Commission's accounts. The funding for this activity is provided for in legislation and is not approved through the Estimates process.

People

We achieve success through our people. To support this, we have developed our Human Resources Plan which provides a framework to enable us to successfully deliver our key objectives.

The strategic review will inform the detail of future decisions about the organisation and the people and skills needed to deliver our ambitions. At this time, before the strategic review reports, the overall aim can be summarised as wanting to be an organisation which is:

- Outward facing; with a clear awareness of what is going on around us, particularly amongst our key stakeholders
- Experts who use our expertise to improve and develop and are accessible (internally and to our stakeholders)
- Proportionate
- Has the people and infrastructure in place to support delivery of our plans - this includes being really good at performance management which develops people and their skills and focuses these towards the right shared goals.

To do these things we will need to further develop our internal communications, our leadership and our management skills. We will finalise our People Strategy to deliver the conclusions of the strategic review whilst at all times we will manage our ambition within our overall financial parameters.

Core staffing levels will remain fairly consistent during the period of this plan with short term staffing increases to deliver the demands created by significant polls, for example, the EU Referendum.

We will continue to work in partnership with the Public and Commercial Services union to build on our existing, constructive relationship. Maintaining good employee relations is central to building engagement and delivering success.

Information and Infrastructure

Our accommodation, IT and information management strategies ensure a cost effective, safe and productive working environment for all staff.

Information and knowledge are vital organisational assets and we are constantly working to increase their value to all staff by improving the systems and protocols we use to manage them. We also recognise the value to our stakeholders of the information and data that we hold and are working to make them available through a variety of channels to further improve transparency. We will continue to invest significantly in systems and infrastructure to improve the facilities and tools we provide both to our staff and to our customers. Particular emphasis has been placed on improving our management of communications with stakeholders.

Over the past five years, we have made significant changes to our estate which has provided improved working environments for our staff whilst realising on-going annual savings in excess of £0.7 million per year. We will continue to seek out efficiencies and improvements but do not anticipate further major changes in our estate until 2020 when we will review our London accommodation. We will, however, continue to improve facilities to support flexible working to provide staff with options that benefit both them and the organisation.

Over the next five years we will continue to invest for improvements in our information systems and processes with a particular emphasis on improving the digital channels available for interacting with our customers. Major projects are planned to improve online systems for party regulation and provision of guidance. We will also seek continuous improvement in our internal systems to keep them up-to-date and fit for purpose. We will invest to maintain a resilient and secure infrastructure which can guarantee business continuity. We also remain fully aware of our environmental responsibilities and will work to address these with the support of an active corporate social responsibility group.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Electoral systems in the United Kingdom

Election to	Voting system	Who is responsible for the legal framework?	Who is elected?	When is the next election?	Electorate[7]
UK Parliament	First past the post	UK Government (Cabinet Office)	650 Members of Parliament (MP)	May 2020	46,353,871
European Parliament	List proportional representation in Great Britain (Single transferable vote in Northern Ireland)	UK Government (Cabinet Office)	73 UK Members of the European Parliament (MEP)	May 2019	46,359,108
Northern Ireland Assembly	Single transferable vote	UK Government (Northern Ireland Office)	108 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)	May 2016	1,247,293
Scottish Parliament	Additional member system	UK Government (Scotland Office)[8]	129 Members of Scottish Parliament (MSP)	May 2016	4,063,206
National Assembly for Wales	Additional member system	UK Government (Wales Office)	60 Assembly Members (AM)	May 2016	2,328,335
London Assembly	Additional member system	UK Government (Cabinet Office)	25 Assembly Members	May 2016	5,839,495
London Mayor	Supplementary vote	UK Government (Cabinet Office)	Mayor	May 2016	5,839,495

*   All electorate figures are for 1 December 2012, and are based on figures collected by the Office for National Statistics from individual ROs, National Records of Scotland and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland.
** The Scotland Bill includes provisions to transfer legislative competence for Scottish Parliament.
*** The draft Wales Bill (published in October 2015) includes provisions to transfer legislative competence for Assembly and local government elections in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales. These provisions will be included in a Wales Bill, expected to be published in early 2016.

Election to	Voting system	Who is responsible for the legal framework?	Who is elected?	When is the next election?	Electorate[7]
Police and Crime Commissioner (England and Wales, excluding London)	Supplementary vote	UK Government (Home Office)	41 Police and Crime Commissioners	May 2016	36,598,876
Local councils	First past the post (England and Wales) Single transferable vote (Northern Ireland and Scotland)	UK Government (Cabinet Office) for local elections in England and Wales; UK Government (Northern Ireland Office) for local elections in Northern Ireland; Scottish Government for local elections in Scotland	More than 20,000 councillors	Dependent locally	47,748,870
Local Authority Mayors (England only)	Supplementary Vote	UK Government (Department for Communities and Local Government)	Mayor	Dependent locally	Variable (local government franchise)
Referendums (e.g. referendums on council tax increases or neighbourhood planning) (England only)	Usually a simple majority of those who voted	UK Government (Department for Communities and Local Government)	N/A	Dependent locally	Variable

Appendix 2: Elections and referendums over the period of this plan

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
May 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly Scottish Parliament National Assembly for Wales London Assembly Mayor of London English local government Police and Crime Commissioner (England and Wales) **June 2016** Referendum on membership of the European Union	**May 2017** English local government Scottish local government Welsh local government	**May 2018** English local government	**May 2019** European Parliament English local government Northern Ireland local government	**May 2020** UK Parliament London Assembly Mayor of London English local Government Police and Crime Commissioner (England and Wales)

Appendix 3.1: Key Performance Measures

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan	Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
1	Electoral registers			
1a	**England (excluding Greater London Authorities)** **585,000 additions to electoral registers** in England (excluding Greater London Authorities) as a result of the public awareness campaign (during the campaign period in March and April 2016).	Data output from EROs' EMS systems to identify the number of electors added to the registers during April 2016. An additional indicator of the success of the campaign will be the number of online registration applications submitted via gov.uk/register-to-vote during the campaign period.	<table><tr><td>2016 - 17</td><td>2017 - 18</td><td>2018 - 19</td><td>2019 - 20</td><td>2020 - 21</td></tr></table> A M J J A S O N D J F M Data from the EMS systems will be collated in August 2016 and the Commission will report by September 2016. The number of online registration applications will be available from GDS in May 2016.	Potential barriers include: • The level of public engagement and interest in the election. • If other public awareness activity has been successful, significant numbers of people may have been added to the register before the start of our campaign. • It is the second campaign since the introduction of IER, meaning only one campaign for online registration benchmarks. • 2016 may also drive less public interest than the UKPGE 2015, and this interest will vary considerably across the UK depending on the elections taking place in a given area. • Ahead of the elections, we will run a public awareness campaign that builds on the lessons learnt from the 2015 General Election campaign. The campaign will also be tailored for specific parts of the UK.
1b	**Greater London Authorities** **195,000 additions to electoral registers** across Greater London Authorities as a result of the public awareness campaign (during the campaign period in March and April 2016).			

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan	Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
1c	Scotland **82,000 additions to electoral registers** across Scotland as a result of the public awareness campaign (during the campaign period in March and April 2016).	Data output from EROs' EMS systems to identify the number of electors added to the registers during April 2016. An additional indicator of the success of the campaign will be the number of online registration applications submitted via gov.uk/register-to-vote during the campaign period.	Data from the EMS systems will be collated in August 2016 and the Commission will report by September 2016. The number of online registration applications will be available from GDS in May 2016.	
1d	Wales **43,500 additions to electoral registers** across Wales as a result of the public awareness campaign (during the campaign period in March and April 2016).			

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan					Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
1e	Northern Ireland **7,500 additions to the electoral register** in Northern Ireland as a result of the NI public awareness campaign (during the campaign period in March and April 2016).	Data provided routinely each month by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI). The data provided in the May update will approximately cover the campaign period.	2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20	2020 - 21	Potential barriers include: • The level of public engagement and interest in the election. • Online registration is not available – completing paper forms will deter some people. • Ahead of the elections, we will run a public awareness campaign that builds on the lessons learnt from the Northern Ireland campaign.
			A	M	J	J	A	

For 1e, the month row continues: A M J J A S O N D J F M

Data will be available in August 2016 and the Commission will report by September 2016.

Measured by post-election public opinion research. Data from May polls available the following September.

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan	Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
2	Supporting, monitoring and intervening - Electoral Registration Officers			
2a	EROs deliver services that meet the Electoral Commission performance standards **100% of the electorate across the UK** served by EROs who meet EC performance standards for delivering high quality electoral registration services.	Baseline - assessment in March 2014: 100% (using assessment of EROs in Great Britain meeting IER performance standard 1).	2016 -17 | 2017 -18 | 2018 -19 | 2019 -20 | 2020 -21 A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M Next measurement will be in Spring 2017 relating to 2016-17 performance against the new set of standards introduced after the transition to IER. We are working with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland on including NI in this measurement for the first time.	• The Commission has no statutory power to require EROs to follow its published guidance. The guidance is intended to support EROs in delivering high quality electoral registration services in line with the performance standards and legislation. The Commission does not have a direct power of direction over EROs. • We do however intervene where EROs are not meeting the standards and recommend improvement to performance.
3	Supporting, monitoring and intervening - Returning Officers			
3a	ROs deliver services that meet the Electoral Commission performance standards* **100% of the electorate across the UK** served by ROs who meet EC performance standards for **well-run elections.**	Baseline - assessment May 2014 elections: 99.14% (using assessment of a sample of 20% of ROs in GB meeting performance standards).	2016 -17 | 2017 -18 | 2018 -19 | 2019 -20 | 2020 -21 A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M July each year (for May polls). We are working with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland on including NI in this measurement for the first time.	• The Commission has no statutory power to require ROs to follow its published guidance. The guidance is intended to support ROs in well-run elections in line with the performance standards and legislation.

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan					Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
3b	ROs and police forces have plans to detect and prevent electoral fraud which are appropriate to the level of risk identified for the specific area

100% of the electorate across the UK served by ROs who meet EC performance standards relating to electoral fraud. | Baseline - assessment May 2014 elections 99.14% (using assessment of a sample of 20% of ROs in GB meeting performance standards, which require ROs to have in place processes to identify any patterns of activity that might indicate potential integrity problems, including what steps are to be taken to deal with any such problems).

Enhanced plans were put in place by ROs and police forces in areas identified as being at higher risk of allegations of electoral fraud. | 2016 - 17 | 2017 - 18 | 2018 - 19 | 2019 - 20 | 2020 - 21 | • The Commission has no statutory power to require ROs to follow its published guidance. However, we do intervene where ROs are not meeting the standards and recommend improvement to performance. |
| | | | A M J J A S O N D J F M | | | | | |
| | | | July each year (for May polls)

In 2016 there will be additional scrutiny of enhanced plans in areas identified as being at higher risk of allegations of electoral fraud.

We are working with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland on including NI in this measurement for the first time. | | | | | |

* The performance standards for ROs focus on the key outcomes from the perspective of voters and those who want to stand for election, and in particular whether ROs are taking the necessary steps to deliver the following outcomes:
  • Voters are able to vote easily and know that their vote will be counted in the way they intended
  • It is easy for people who want to stand for election to find out how to get involved, what the rules are, and what they have to do to comply with these rules, and they can have confidence in the management of the process and the result.

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan	Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
4	Regulating and supporting political parties, candidates and campaigners			
4a	Regulated parties make complete, accurate and timely returns to the Electoral Commission The Electoral Commission's work facilitates **90%** compliance on timeliness by regulated parties with an income or expenditure of more than £250,000. Active engagement by the Commission with any that do not comply.	Regulated parties make complete, accurate and timely returns relating to donations, loans, annual statements of accounts and campaign spending.	**2016 - 17** | **2017 - 18** | **2018 - 19** | **2019 - 20** | **2020 - 21** A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M Measurement will be throughout the year with results collated and reported to the Electoral Commission Board each quarter (July, September, December and March).	• A potential barrier is that this measure is dependent on the performance of the parties in making timely and accurate returns. The nature of parties (often relying on volunteers at a local level) and the complexity of the rules can sometimes present genuine difficulties for parties. • We support parties by ensuring our guidance documents and forms are clear and easy to use, and we continue to enhance our online returns system. • We will also continue to suggest to government(s) appropriate changes to the rules (e.g. the published 2013 Commission Regulatory Review recommendations) and take proportionate regulatory action where parties do not comply.

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan					Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
4b	Investigations completed within deadlines **90%** of the Electoral Commission's casework and investigations are completed within published deadlines.	Baseline – performance as at December 2015: 93%.	2016 - 17 A M J	2017 - 18 J A S	2018 - 19 O N D	2019 - 20 J F M	2020 - 21	• A potential barrier is that the complexity, scale or nature of some investigations is such that proper completion takes longer than the measure indicator. We are streamlining our investigative processes to ensure efficiency and minimise incidents of lengthy investigation.
			July each year.					
4c	Publication of campaign spending The Electoral Commission ensures that **100% of campaign spending returns are published** within 8 weeks of campaigners having returned the information to the Commission.	Baseline – performance as at December 2014: 100%	2016 - 17 A M J	2017 - 18 J A S	2018 - 19 O N D	2019 - 20 J F M	2020 - 21	• Timely publication is dependent on campaigners providing accurate returns by the deadline. To mitigate against this, we provide guidance to or take regulatory action for those campaigners that do not comply. • This is also dependent on the extent to which parties submit online expenditure returns, as otherwise the administrative burden of inputting the data falls to us and can extend the time taken to publish it.
			Measurement will be from the returns received at polls and reported to the Electoral Commission Board September each year (for May polls).					

Appendix 3.2 – Indicators of our operating environment

Listed below are a number of indicators that we monitor to give us an indication of the overall health of the democracy, and to help us to understand where we need to focus our efforts. These are measures that concern activities where we seek to influence, but have limited control over the outcomes.

1. All votes cast are included in the count for elections in the UK

We want to ensure our work contributes towards a reduction in the number of rejected votes and a positive indicator of this would be to **reduce the number of votes rejected to as close to 0% as possible**. As a baseline, we have reviewed the data from the most recent comparable elections:

- Scottish Parliament election (2011) the percentage of ballot papers rejected at the count was 0.42% (8,416).[*]
- National Assembly for Wales election (2011) 0.82% (7,837) were rejected.
- Northern Ireland Assembly elections (2011) 1.8% (12,369) were rejected.
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections (2012) 2.8% (155,884) were rejected.
- English local elections (2012) 0.6% (29,140) were rejected.

We will publish this data after every election, usually in September for May polls.

It is important to note this indicator is dependent on the service provided by individual ROs as well as the quality of instructions and information made available to voters. This can be mitigated by the Commission to some extent, for example, through guidance and performance standards and by continuing to monitor and scrutinise legislation prescribing instructions and information for voters. Some voters may also choose to spoil their ballot paper deliberately and some postal ballot packs might be rejected because of attempted fraud.

2. The results of elections are trusted and accepted

We want to see that our work contributes towards a reduction in the number of legal challenges to the results of elections – because of electoral fraud or mistakes in administration. A positive indicator of this would be to reduce the number of successful legal challenges to **as close to zero as possible**.

It's helpful to view this indicator in the context of previous elections. In relation to the May 2015 polls, six election petitions were issued - including three relating to UK Parliamentary elections and three relating to local government elections (as at February 2016, three have proceeded to trial, two of which have been dismissed. One resulted in the election of two members being voided and fresh elections to fill the two vacancies). We will collate this information throughout the year and report to the Electoral Commission Board in July each year.

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[*] Constituency ballots

This indicator is dependent on the effectiveness of electoral fraud prevention plans put in place by individual EROs and ROs. This can be mitigated by the Commission to some extent, for example, through guidance and performance standards and by continuing to monitor the response by police forces to allegations. Improving awareness of electoral fraud and making it easier for people to report concerns may increase the number of allegations made to police forces, and therefore the number of petitions. Reforming the system for challenging the results of elections may also increase the number of challenges which are heard.

3. Confidence that registering to vote is straightforward, accessible and secure

We want our work to contribute towards an improvement in confidence that registering to vote is straightforward, accessible and secure. A positive indicator of this improvement would be to see an increase on our previous survey results – from **68%-90%** to **as close to 100% as possible**. We have used data from our December 2015 survey as a baseline:

- 90% of those surveyed were confident they know how to register.

- 75% of those surveyed were satisfied with the registration system.

- 68% of those surveyed were confident their registration details were secure.

We will publish this data after every election, usually in September for May polls.

It is important to note that this indicator is dependent on the service provided by individual EROs as well as the operation of the IER Digital Service (for example, a failure of the online registration website may have an impact). This can be mitigated by the Commission to some extent, for example, through guidance and performance standards and by continuing to scrutinise the running of the digital system. We also manage specific elements of the service such as the design of the forms and some letters used to interact with the public.

4. Confidence that taking part in elections is straightforward, accessible and secure

We want our work to contribute towards an improvement in confidence that taking part in elections is straightforward, accessible and secure. A positive indicator of this would be to see an increase on our previous survey results from between **56% and 92%** to **as close to 100% as possible**. We have used data from our post-election surveys following the last comparable set of elections as a baseline:

	Confident that the elections were well run	Confident that they know how to cast their vote	Satisfied with the process of voting	Believe that voting at a polling station is safe from fraud and abuse	Believe that voting by post is safe from fraud and abuse
English local elections (2012 data used)	74%	86% (question whether they found it easy to fill in the ballot paper)	80%	88%	55%
London Assembly and Mayor (2012)	78%	-	82%	85%	51%
Police and Crime Commissioners (2012)	33%	-	78%	85%	57%
Northern Ireland Assembly (2011)	71%	93% (question whether they found it easy to fill in the ballot paper)	77%	87%	49%
Scottish Parliament (2011)	84%	97% (question whether they found it easy to fill in the ballot paper)	82%	90%	61%
National Assembly for Wales (2011)	78%	96% (question whether they found it easy to fill in the ballot paper)	80%	86%	57%
Total UK results (2011 polls)	77%	-	80%	86%	57%

We plan to measure this indicator after every election, usually in September for May polls.

It is important to note that this indicator is dependent on the service provided by ROs and their staff. This can be mitigated by the Commission to some extent through performance standards and the provision of timely and accurate guidance. The indicator on well-run elections in particular can be affected by other circumstances around the polls which may not be within the Commission's direct control (for example the negative perception of the new role of Police and Crime Commissioners is likely to have affected perceptions of the first elections in 2012).

5. Agreement that appropriate action will be taken by the authorities if a campaigner is caught breaking the rules on campaign funding

We want our work to contribute towards an improvement in confidence that appropriate action will be taken if party and finance rules are broken. A positive indicator of an improvement would be an increase in our post-election survey results from 50% to 75%. We have used data from our December 2015 survey as a baseline where 50% of those surveyed agree that, if a political party was caught breaking the rules regarding party finance; the authorities would take appropriate action.

We plan to measure this indicator every December through a public opinion survey.

This indicator is dependent on the police & prosecutory bodies taking appropriate action. We will continue to work closely with such bodies to seek to ensure this is achieved. It is also dependent on the public perception of wider integrity in politics.

Appendix 4 - EU Referendum Measures

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan	Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
1a	75% of the electorate feel that they had enough information to vote with confidence	Results against the targets will be found from the waves of tracking research undertaken with the general public in the week(s) immediately after the registration phase and following the campaign. This target is based on data from the Scottish Independence Referendum (77%) and the Welsh Assembly Referendum (49%) and the Referendum on the voting system for UK parliamentary elections 2011(69%)	Measured by campaign tracking public opinion research.	Levels of public engagement and interest in the referendum. The campaign might not be effective with the public. Ahead of the EU Referendum, we will run a voter registration and public awareness campaign, building on lessons learnt from the Scottish Referendum.
1b	250,000 additions to the register from overseas electors over the duration of the Commission's public awareness campaign	Data output from EROs' EMS systems to identify the number of electors added to the registers. An additional indicator of the success of the campaign will be the number of online registration applications submitted via gov.uk/register-to-vote during the campaign period.	The timing of the collation of data from EMS systems will be following the EU Referendum.	Levels of public engagement and interest in the election. If other activity has been successful, significant numbers of people may have been added to the register before the start of our campaign. Ahead of the EU Referendum, we will run a voter registration and public awareness campaign; this includes extensive collaboration with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and building on lessons learnt from the 2015 General Election campaign.

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan	Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
Campaigners find it easy to follow the rules and are confident in the result				
2a	Campaigners make complete, accurate and timely returns to the Commission The Electoral Commission's work facilitates **90%** timely and accurate returns by regulated campaigns	Campaigners make complete, accurate and timely returns relating to donations, loans and campaign spending. Previous baseline: 80%	Measured throughout campaign and results will be collated in the post Referendum report which will be published in autumn 2016.	This measure is dependent on the performance of the campaigners in making timely and accurate returns. The nature of campaigners (often relying on volunteers at a local level) and the complexity of the rules can sometimes present genuine difficulties for campaigners. The Commission will support campaigners by ensuring our guidance documents and forms are easy to use, and we will continue to enhance our online returns system.
2b	Investigations completed within deadlines **95%** of the Electoral Commission's casework and investigations are completed within published deadlines.	Baseline – performance as at December 2015: 93%.	Measured throughout the campaign.	The complexity, scale or nature of some investigations is such that completion takes longer than the existing measure indicator. The Commission is streamlining its investigative processes to ensure efficiency and minimise incidents of lengthy investigation.

	Performance Measure and target	Measurement	When the measure can be assessed over the period of the Corporate Plan	Potential barriers to achieving the Performance Measure and associated mitigating actions
2c	The Electoral Commission ensures that **100% of campaign spending returns are published** within 8 weeks of campaigners returning the information to the Commission.	Baseline – performance as at December 2014: 100%	Measurement will be from the returns received by the Referendum and will be collated in the post Referendum campaign report which will be published in autumn 2016.	Publication by the Commission is dependent on campaigners providing accurate returns by the deadline. The Commission can provide advice and guidance to or take regulatory action for those campaigners that do not comply. It is also dependent on the extent to which parties submit online expenditure returns, as otherwise the administrative burden of inputting the data falls to the Commission and can extend the time taken to publish it.
2d	Campaigners are registered within **5 working days** upon receipt of a complete registration form	Baseline – performance at Scottish Referendum: 97.6%	We will measure monthly and the results will also be reported in the post Referendum report which will be published autumn 2016.	The volume of applications may mean we may have insufficient resources to process applications within 5 working days. Incomplete or complex applications may be received that require more time to process.
Management of the polls delivers a well-run referendum that builds on the learning and best practice from previous referendums				
3a	**Delivery of poll is consistent with Chief Counting Officer directions**	All directions followed other than where exceptions have been granted.	Measurement throughout the referendum period and results collated in the post Referendum report.	This measure is dependent on the performance of the Counting Officers in delivering the referendum in line with the Chief Counting Officer's directions. Extensive engagement is planned with Counting Officers and regional Counting Officers including through the EU Referendum Management Board (EURMB).

Indicators of the operating environment - specific to the EU referendum

1. All votes are included within the count for the referendum

We want our work to contribute towards a reduction in the number of rejected votes. A positive indicator of this would be to reduce the number of votes rejected to as close to **0% as possible**. We have used data from the most recent comparable referendums as a baseline. The percentage of ballot papers rejected at the count for the following referendums were as follows:

- Scottish Independence Referendum: 0.1%

- Referendum on the voting system for UK parliamentary elections: 0.62%

This measurement will be reported in the post Referendum report, which will be published in autumn 2016.

It is important to note that this indicator is dependent on the service provided by individual Counting Officers as well as the quality of the instructions and information made available to voters. These can be mitigated by the Commission to some extent, for example, the Chief Counting Officer's directions and guidance to Counting Officers and by continuing to monitor and scrutinise legislation prescribing instructions and information for voters.

Some voters may also choose to spoil their ballot paper deliberately and some postal ballot packs might be rejected because of attempted fraud.

2. The result of the referendum is trusted and accepted

We want to our work and the Chief Counting Officer's work to contribute towards reducing the number of legal challenges. A positive indicator of this would be to reduce the number of successful legal challenges to as **close to zero as possible**. We have used data from the most recent comparable referendums as a baseline:

- Scottish Independence Referendum: 0 legal challenges

- Referendum on the voting system for UK parliamentary elections: 1 legal challenge

- Wales Referendum: 0 legal challenges

This measurement will be reported in the post Referendum report, which will be published in autumn 2016.

This indicator is dependent on the effectiveness of the service provided by Counting Officers and their staff. We are undertaking a range of measures aimed at mitigating this risk, such as ensuring campaigners understand the designation process.

3. Confidence that taking part in the referendum is straightforward, accessible and secure

We want to ensure that as close as possible to 100% of the population is confident that taking part in the referendum is straightforward, accessible and secure. We have used data from the most recent comparable referendums as a baseline:

Scotland Independence Referendum

- confident that the referendum was well run: 73%

- satisfied with the process of voting: 81%

- believe that voting at a polling station is safe from fraud and abuse: 81%

- believe that voting by post is safe from fraud and abuse: 59%

Wales Referendum

- confident that the referendum was well run: 77%

- satisfied with the process of voting: 90%

Referendum on the voting system for UK parliamentary elections

- confident that the referendum was well run: 72%

- satisfied with the process of voting: 80%

- believe that voting at a polling station is safe from fraud and abuse: 41%

- believe that voting by post is safe from fraud and abuse: 57%

This measurement will be reported in the post Referendum report, which will be published in autumn 2016.

This indicator is dependent on the service provided by Counting Officers and their staff. They can be more directly affected than at elections through the issue of directions however it's still an activity we're not entirely in control of.

The
Electoral
Commission

We are an independent body set up by
the UK Parliament. We regulate party and
election finance and set standards for well-run
elections. We work to support a healthy
democracy, where elections and referendums
are based on our principles of trust,
participation, and no undue influence.

Putting voters first