Note of the catch-up of the Electoral Commission board held on Wednesday 18 July 2018 at 10.00 am

Present/on call: John Holmes (JEH) Chair
                Sue Bruce (SB)
                Anna Carragher (AC)
                Sarah Chambers (SC)
                Elan Closs Stephens (ECS)
                John Horam (JRH)
                David Howarth (DH)
                Alasdair Morgan (AM)
                Bridget Prentice (BP)
                Rob Vincent (RV)

In attendance: Claire Bassett (CB)
                Kieran Rix (KR)
                Ailsa Irvine (AI)
                Robert Posner (RP)
                Craig Westwood (CW)
                Nancy Bruseker (NB)

1. Apologies

   None.

2. Headlines/issues since last board meeting

   2.1 Commissioners and the Executive Team discussed the release of the Vote Leave investigation report. The group agreed that the Commission would be more proactive in clarifying inaccurate press reports, and publicising recommendations made by the Commission on improving electoral processes.

   2.2 RP updated the Board on ongoing investigations and any potential legal challenges. A discussion followed on the importance of encouraging all parties to improve governance for electoral spending reporting.

   2.4 CW noted the upcoming publication of the interim report by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) select committee of their investigation into ‘fake news’ and disinformation. CW also advised Commissioners about the planned publication of our statutory evaluation on the voter ID pilots on 19 July.
2.5 AI provided an update on canvass reform work, and contingency planning for unplanned electoral events. She noted that Northern Ireland online electoral registration, introduced in June, was working well; 81% of new registrations were through the online system and applications had gone up by 50% on the previous month.

2.6 KR reported that the Annual Report and Accounts were due to be laid in Parliament on 19 July as planned. He advised that, subject to background checks, a new Head of HR would be in place shortly. An appointment had also been made to the independent advisor to the Audit Committee post, and their first Committee meeting should be in October 2018.

2.7 JEH reported that the recruitment of the new Commissioners was proceeding, and was hopeful that Royal Assent could be received by October.

3. Summer arrangements

3.1 Commissioners were asked to provide contact information over summer holidays.

Meeting adjourned at 11.15.