

From: [FOI](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOI 206/18 - Preparations for second EU referendum - response
Date: 23 January 2019 09:59:50
Attachments: [FW Job description for PSO - Redacted.pdf](#)
[FW Shadow referendum project board \(1\) - Redacted.pdf](#)
[FW Shadow referendum project board \(4\) - Redacted.pdf](#)
[FW Shadow referendum project board \(8\) - Redacted.pdf](#)
[FW Shadow referendum project board \(16\) - Redacted.pdf](#)
[FW Shadow referendum project board \(17\) - Redacted.pdf](#)

Dear [REDACTED],

Our Ref: FOI 206/18

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **17 December 2018**.

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and regrets that it has not done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days.

Your request is in bold below followed by our response.

- 1. Can you please tell me what preparations are either currently underway or are being considered for a second Referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union**

Our response is as follows:

We hold some of information you have requested.

The scope of your request captures information created or produced by the 17 December 2018. Anything beyond this timeframe is considered to be outside of scope.

The information provided relates to work undertaken by the Electoral Commission.

The Commission has provided you with a number of internal emails regarding the intention to form a Referendum Contingency Board. These emails are attached.

The board was set up following a discussion which took place at the Commission's Events Delivery Steering Group. Please find the relevant extract of the minutes below.

Events Delivery Steering Group – Extract from minutes: 17/12/2018.

Sub heading: Contingency planning – referendums

3.7 AI said that in the event of another referendum, the Commission's activity would be managed as a separate programme of work. The group agreed that from January 2019 we should initiate a referendum contingency programme, with some early discussion about roles and responsibilities, to be led by Craig Westwood. This would allow the Events Delivery Steering Group the space to focus on the elections we know are scheduled to take place, while still ensuring that we further advance our referendum contingency planning and would be able to respond quickly and effectively should one be called.

AI– Ailsa Irvine – Head of Guidance, Electoral Guidance.

Please note that, the emails provided do not relate to the creation of any contingency plans regarding a second EU referendum. However they do relate to the Commissions activity/preparations on the matter of referendums.

The Commissions Referendum Contingency Board was set up to discuss the impact on the Commissions work should a second EU referendum be called. The board will also discuss the process and procedures which should be considered.

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority, but in some circumstances we cannot responsibly release requested information, and we ask for your understanding in this regard.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-i-make-an-foi-request>

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]

Access to Information Officer (FOI and DPA)

The Electoral Commission

FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 15 January 2019 09:45
To: FOI
Subject: FW: Job description for PSO

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:45
To: Craig Westwood
Subject: Job description for PSO

We spoke. I do think we ought to advertise, though clearly if things suddenly became more urgent we might want to speed up the process.

Here is a headline draft:

“VACANCY FOR PSO

As part of good practice contingency planning the Commission is making preparations for the coming year. A shadow programme board is being set up to oversee these arrangements. We are therefore looking for a PSO to support this process. Whilst we expect this role to be part time initially, that will change should circumstances so dictate.

The successful candidate will have experience of project management on a substantial project or projects. They will need to be comfortable to take responsibility, to manage large amounts of complex information, and to deal with technical detail. They will need experience of dealing with senior stakeholders. Above all they will need to be comfortable to work in a fast-paced and on occasion pressured environment. In return they will gain insight into a fundamental part of the democratic process at a key moment.

The postholder will need the permission of their line manager, and will need to be able to start work as soon as possible.”

Some questions:

- Do we think this is a full time role? I think probably not whilst it's shadow, but full time if no longer shadow;
- I do think this is one of the rare roles where the person has to be based at Bunhill Row;
- They will presumably need to be willing to travel

Views?

Carol

Carol Sweetenham
Project Manager (PFR Online)

The Electoral Commission



electoralcommission.org.uk

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 15 January 2019 09:22
To: FOI
Subject: FW: Shadow referendum project board

From: Tom Hawthorn
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:35
To: Carol Sweetenham
Subject: RE: Shadow referendum project board

Thanks Carol, can't wait! Defiantly agree we need input/involvement from Legal.

Given the importance of both PFR online and the results collation system, I'd suggest Jo CD also needs to be in the loop from the outset too.

Is there a risk that we're effectively convening the whole of SLG? Or is that a benefit we can use to our advantage?

T

Tom Hawthorn
Head of Policy

The Electoral Commission

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:24
To: Ailsa Irvine < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Craig Westwood < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Phil Thompson < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Tom Hawthorn < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Kieran Rix < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Melanie Davidson < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Niki Nixon < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Emma Hartley < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Louise Edwards < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>
Cc: < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Bob Posner < [\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>
Subject: Shadow referendum project board

We discussed at today's Events Delivery Group and agreed that as part of good practice contingency planning we should set up a shadow referendum project board. This e-mail:

- i) Lets you know that [REDACTED] will be in touch to arrange a first meeting early in the New Year;
- ii) Asks whether you are content to form part of this Board in person or through a representative (Emma – whom should we invite from your end?);

iii) Asks whether this is the right membership and, if not, who else should be invited. In particular do we need someone from Legal?

██████ we spoke. Grateful if you could arrange. I will circulate draft TOR and any papers nearer the meeting.

Carol

Carol Sweetenham
Project Manager (PFR Online)

The Electoral Commission
██████
electoralcommission.org.uk

[REDACTED]

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 15 January 2019 09:22
To: FOI
Subject: FW: Shadow referendum project board

From: Emma Hartley
Sent: 17 December 2018 17:09
To: Carol Sweetenham
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Shadow referendum project board

Hi Carol/ [REDACTED]

Tim Crowley is my interim replacement and will start from 2 January so he should be part of this group.

[REDACTED]

Thanks,
Emma

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:24
To: Ailsa Irvine [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Craig Westwood <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Phil Thompson [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Tom Hawthorn [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Kieran Rix [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Melanie Davidson [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Niki Nixon <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Emma Hartley [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Louise Edwards [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>; Bob Posner [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)>
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[REDACTED] we spoke. Grateful if you could arrange. I will circulate draft TOR and any papers nearer the meeting.

Carol

Carol Sweetenham
Project Manager (PFR Online)

The Electoral Commission


electoralcommission.org.uk

From: Carol Sweetenham

Sent: 17 December 2018 16:54

To: Ann Watt [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Andy O'Neill [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>;
Rhydian Thomas [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Cc: Ailsa Irvine [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Craig Westwood

[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: Shadow referendum project board

The Events Delivery Group today decided to set up a shadow referendum project board. This is to ask whether one of you might lead for devolved offices, on the understanding that all three of you would need to be involved if it were no longer shadow.

Carol

Carol Sweetenham
Project Manager (PFR Online)

The Electoral Commission
[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk

[REDACTED]

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 15 January 2019 09:44
To: FOI
Subject: FW: Shadow referendum project board

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:52
To: Ailsa Irvine
Subject: RE: Shadow referendum project board

OK, will contact the three of them to explain and ask who should lead.

Carol

From: Ailsa Irvine
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:51
To: Carol Sweetenham
Subject: Re: Shadow referendum project board

That makes sense - and we should be clear that in the event there is to be a poll, we would expect them all to be active members of the programme (as they were in 2016).

Ailsa

Ailsa Irvine
Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance

The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk

On 17 Dec 2018, at 16:46, Carol Sweetenham [REDACTED] [@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk)> wrote:

Actually do you think all 3 ought to be involved – say one attending and the other two on the copy list?

Carol

From: Ailsa Irvine
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:38
To: Carol Sweetenham
Subject: Re: Shadow referendum project board

Thanks Carol.

Obviously happy to be involved and I think the membership looks about right for a shadow board, although I agree that we should add someone from legal and I think we're also missing Jo C-D as lead of one of the key workstreams. I also wonder if we should get (at least) one of the DO Heads involved so we make sure we're taking a UK-wide view. If we do find ourselves facing a referendum, we will probably want to widen this out further.

Ailsa

Ailsa Irvine

Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance


The Electoral Commission




electoralcommission.org.uk

On 17 Dec 2018, at 16:24, Carol Sweetenham @electoralcommission.org.uk> wrote:

We discussed at today's Events Delivery Group and agreed that as part of good practice contingency planning we should set up a shadow referendum project board. This e-mail:

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 we spoke. Grateful if you could arrange. I will circulate draft TOR and any papers nearer the meeting.

Carol

Carol Sweetenham

Project Manager (PFR Online)

The Electoral Commission



electoralcommission.org.uk

[REDACTED]

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 15 January 2019 09:44
To: FOI
Subject: FW: Shadow referendum project board

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:47
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Shadow referendum project board

Also need to add Jo Crofton Diggins. Am talking to Ailsa about including at least one devolved office head.

Carol

From: Craig Westwood
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:33
To: Carol Sweetenham
Cc: [REDACTED]; Emma Hartley
Subject: RE: Shadow referendum project board

Thanks Carol – Emma's [REDACTED] cover will be Tim Crowley; email in the process if being set up but he'll be the campaigns contact for this, though may choose to delegate to / double up with [REDACTED] in the first instance. I'll discuss it with him in that first week and confirm.

Craig

From: Carol Sweetenham
Sent: 17 December 2018 16:24
To: Ailsa Irvine [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Craig Westwood [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Phil Thompson [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Tom Hawthorn [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Kieran Rix [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Melanie Davidson [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Niki Nixon [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Emma Hartley [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Louise Edwards [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>; Bob Posner [REDACTED]@electoralcommission.org.uk>
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Carol

Carol Sweetenham

Project Manager (PFR Online)

The Electoral Commission

██████████
electoralcommission.org.uk