

The
Electoral
Commission

Business Plan 2019/20



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Foreword from the Chair, Sir John Holmes

It has become commonplace to say that the only prediction we can make with any confidence for the coming period is that uncertainty is set to continue. We certainly need to be ready for anything and everything on the electoral front. At the same time there are some things we can be clear about: we need to be sure that the Commission is fully active with business as usual, and pressing forward with policy priorities too.

The scale of the external challenges we face in this digital age, and the consequent need to sharpen our regulatory tools, step up our policy and research effort, and improve our underlying IT infrastructure, have convinced us of the need for more resources for 2019/20. These investments will help to ensure that the Commission remains fully fit for purpose and capable of dealing with everything which may be required of us in the coming year and subsequent years.

Parties and campaigners are increasingly turning to social media to reach the electorate. Digital campaigning can be a force for good in a strong democracy, as it helps campaigners reach wider audiences. At the same time we must make sure electoral law is equipped to regulate effectively in this area. We have made a package of recommendations to improve voters' ability to know who is targeting them, and to enable us to see in more detail what parties and other campaigners are actually doing. We urge the government to implement these recommendations rapidly through appropriate legislation.

There is no time to lose if voters are not to begin to question more seriously what they are hearing and being told during campaigns. Likewise, the technology platforms need to live up to their promises of greater transparency around political advertising and use of false identities and addresses. For our part we will continue to work with a wide range of partners also looking to regulate activity in this area.

The Commission has spent a lot of time and effort in the last two years on investigating and, where appropriate, sanctioning donations and expenditure from past elections and the EU referendum. That has been necessary and important in showing that parties and campaigners who do not abide by the rules set by parliaments can expect to face consequences.

However, it is not our ambition to be seen as a hostile regulator. Rather, we look to be an organisation which helps everyone to understand and comply with the rules. We will be working closely with the main political parties and other campaigners in the coming year not only to refine our guidance further, but also to assist them in strengthening their compliance procedures. At the same time, we will be investing in new technology to make financial reporting easier and more consistent.

We also want to ensure that electoral law is ready for the tests ahead and fit for the 21st century. We continue to urge the UK's governments to implement in full the

recommendations made in 2016 by the Law Commissions. If these changes cannot be made this year, a clear roadmap for future progress is needed. We look forward to working with parties as well as the UK's governments and parliaments to achieve this.

Meanwhile, we are continuing to research and reflect on how the electoral system can be modernised and improved to give voters extra confidence in its security and effectiveness, and to start to match the expectations of younger generations about technological change.

There is little possibility of moving to any kind of digital voting for UK-wide elections in the near term, but we can help to prepare for whatever may become possible in the future by modernising some of the fundamentals of our system, starting with voter registration. This is already under way, after the introduction of individual registration and online applications, through reform of the current clunky and expensive canvass process. We hope that governments will be ready in due course to take this further. Better use can be made of other databases and other public transactions to improve the accuracy and completeness of the registers. We can also move towards joining up the registers and making registration more automated and eventually automatic. This is one of our key areas of policy work.

This year is likely to see legislation published in Scotland and Wales on changes to devolved elections. This legislation will also outline provisions making the Commission directly accountable to the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Parliament for those aspects of our work that relate to devolved elections. We are positive about the opportunities for innovation this presents. We look forward to continuing our work with the devolved legislatures and governments to ensure the best possible outcome for voters and for those running for office or administering elections in Scotland and in Wales.

Overall, I have no doubt that the Commission is well prepared for the many challenges and opportunities of the next year, thanks to the hard work and expertise of our staff. Our capacity to respond quickly and effectively is also built upon strong partnerships and collaboration with the UK's governments and parliaments, local authorities, the electoral community and fellow regulators. I look forward to the opportunities to improve the experience and confidence of voters across the whole of the UK.

Introduction from the Chief Executive, Bob Posner

We operate one of the most transparent political finance regimes in the world and public levels of satisfaction with the running of elections are high. But we must not become complacent. As we move into 2019/20 we'll continue to make the case for the legislative changes outlined above by the Chair, but we'll also deliver on our commitment to strengthen and modernise our regulatory approach. We will further increase transparency and invest more in digital tools for the benefit of voters, parties, campaigners and the electoral community.

We are updating our online political finance system. This will make it quicker and easier for parties and campaigners to make registration applications, and to provide us with the data we use to check compliance. These changes will make it easier for us to publish this data externally, freeing up our team so they can focus on positive regulatory activity. The changes will also make it easier for users to search for data, meaning information can be more readily scrutinised by the media and the public.

We'll also continue to modernise our guidance. We're moving guidance to a fully digital format, so that it is more accessible and searchable, making it easier for campaigners and parties to find the information they need.

Both these improvements will be accessed through a brand new corporate website which more closely meets the needs of its diverse range of users.

And we're offering candidates and parties even greater clarity on the rules governing election spending. This will be done through our new Codes of Practice that parliament will be able to approve, which have a particular focus on digital campaigning. We have consulted MPs, parties and others on these Codes. It's just one example of the partnership work we do which delivers better regulation, both for the parties and the candidates that use the system and for voters.

Finally, in liaison with the police and Crown Prosecution Service we'll be developing the capability to undertake our own prosecutions, bringing the Commission in line with other regulators and freeing up police and prosecutor resources. This change will enable us to compel the release of information providing voters with greater transparency. We are consulting with political parties and others and will be sharing the results in early 2020.

In addition to the focus on our regulatory approach, 2019/20 will see the Commission respond to a number of Government priorities. We will be working closely with colleagues in local authorities to ensure the May 2019 local elections run smoothly, and to support those returning officers piloting voter ID. Once the polls are over, the Commission will take up its statutory duty to evaluate the success of the pilots and to determine what they tell us about mitigating the risks of voter fraud.

Local elections bring with them new opportunities for us and local authority Electoral Registration Officers to encourage and enable voter registration. We have already started our voter registration campaign and anticipate people across England and Northern Ireland registering to vote. More broadly, we will be thinking about ways the registration process can be overhauled. We want to build on the move to individual electoral registration that also gave voters the ability to register to vote online. These changes were a significant first step in modernising the system, but we know more can be done.

Last year, we welcomed proposals from the UK's governments that would enable electoral administrators in Great Britain to use data to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the annual canvass. This year we will need to make sure the detailed plans are workable and can be delivered successfully. We will also be considering the possibilities of further innovations such as data matching and automatic registration in order to drive efficiency and improve the accuracy and completeness of the registers.

We will improve and modernise our approach and support others to do the same. This work will require investment in the technological infrastructure our staff need to deliver their work. It will also require a collaborative approach, and I look forward to strengthening the relationships we already have with many organisations and individuals.

We know that many of the challenges we seek to address this year affect other public bodies as well as those we work with and regulate. Change is best achieved when we work together.

Our vision and goals

Our vision is to be a **world-class** public sector organisation – **innovative, delivering great value** and **getting right what matters most** to **voters** and **legislators**.

We are working to achieve this vision through a five-year work programme with four goals:

1. to enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible
2. to ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches
3. to be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age
4. to provide value for money, making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters

Our achievements in 2018/19

This business plan covers the second year of our five year work programme. Our annual report will provide more detailed information on performance for 2018/19, but these achievements demonstrate some of the progress we have made towards the delivery of our corporate goals.

Goal 1: Enabling the delivery of free and fair elections

- Supported the delivery of the May 2018 English local government and local Mayoral elections. Our award winning public awareness campaign helped to add 270,000 voters to the electoral registers, and continued to drive voter registration ahead of the polls.
- Supported the delivery of the first ever Recall petition by the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland.
- Worked with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Office to launch online electoral registration which will make registering to vote simpler and more accessible.
- Published a revised Code of Practice for Electoral Observers and modernised the observer application process, following a consultation.
- Developed the first tranche of our modern, more accessible guidance for consultation with a selection of users.

Goal 2: Ensuring an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation

- Improved public confidence in political finance by demonstrating that we will intervene to prevent non-compliance and take robust action where non-compliance occurs.
- Delivered robust and effective enforcement of the political finance laws in the UK, by investigating potential offences and publishing the outcome of each investigation, including in high profile matters where the public interest is high.
- Extended the transparency of political finance in the UK by publishing quarterly donation and loan information for Northern Ireland recipients, following the Transparency of Donations and Loans Order 2018 as well as publishing annual and quarterly financial returns from all other parties.
- Improved public registers of political parties in Great Britain and Northern Ireland by updating, adding and removing entries as needed.
- Successfully intervened in the Supreme Court's consideration of the interpretation of electoral expenses, an example of our more proactive and authoritative stance as a regulator.

Goal 3: Working as an independent and respected centre of expertise

- Published our evaluation of the May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes. The UK Government took on board and has acted on our main recommendation to encourage a wider range of local councils to run pilot schemes in May 2019.
- Published our digital campaigning report, which sets out a package of recommendations for improving transparency for voters, as well as for the social media platforms themselves. Our recommendations have been discussed widely in the UK's legislatures and beyond, and have attracted support from a broad range of parliamentary bodies, fellow regulators, think tanks and commentators.

Goal 4: Providing value for money

- Refreshed our corporate brand to create consistency and brand recognition across a wide range of our work, in line with our organisational values.
- Delivered an excellent level of customer service, meeting all of our performance metrics, ensuring the Commission deals with enquiries and requests for information in an open, professional and efficient way.
- Continued to make good progress on transforming how we work at the Commission by rolling out Wi-Fi across our estate and successfully completing a working hour's pilot with Commission employees.
- Improved the Commission's resilience by upgrading our Disaster Recovery site.

Our external environment

Delivering well run elections

It is important to recognise that delivering well run elections continues to be a challenge. This is largely because electoral law still needs modernising, local authority budgets continue to come under pressure, and because a growing number of skilled professionals are leaving the electoral administration profession.

These factors have been compounded in recent years by unscheduled electoral events. As we look ahead to the planned polls for 2019, the voter identification pilots and the potential for unscheduled events, we will need to continue to support the electoral community to respond.

Canvass reform

The significant planned changes to the annual canvass in Great Britain will need careful implementation and management to ensure that they are delivered successfully. Working with the UK's governments and electoral administrators, we will have a key role to play in ensuring that Electoral Registration Officers and their teams have the systems, skills and guidance to support both local and national data matching. We will also want to ensure that new canvass communications and form designs have been properly tested with the public before Electoral Registration Officers use them.

Voters' expectations in a digital world

Accessing public services and information online is an expectation of many voters. Making services easy to use and to access is vitally important in encouraging voter participation. We need to work with the UK's governments, Registration Officers and relevant experts in digital service delivery to consider how registering and voting can be updated to meet voters' needs and expectations, whilst ensuring the democratic system remains secure and protected from fraud.

We also need to address the use of digital campaigning tools, ensuring transparency and accountability are not compromised. Voters have a right to know who is trying to influence them online. The Commission is working closely with a number of other bodies on this issue, including regulators such as the Information Commissioner's Office, parliamentary groups such as the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport select committee on fake news, and social media companies themselves.

The urgent need to modernise electoral law

The last year has seen politicians, campaigners and academics add their voices to the Commission's calls for modernised electoral law. The legislation governing the UK's elections is significantly out of date, complex and inconsistent. It is of concern that this

area has been persistently overlooked and we now urge the UK's governments to implement the recommendations made in 2016 by the Law Commissions. Implementing these proposals, as well as other recommendations that we have made in recent years, would help to improve confidence in the security and integrity of elections.

Transparency of donations to political parties in Northern Ireland

We were pleased to see the law finally change in 2018 to allow the publication of information on donations and loans reported to us by political parties in Northern Ireland. This change provides increased transparency to the public on how political parties are funded.

However, the Commission continues to be prevented from disclosing any information concerning donations to political parties in Northern Ireland made before 1 July 2017. For transparency covering an important period in UK democracy, we need this legislation backdated to January 2014. This would open up a period of intense electoral activity to scrutiny, taking in two UK parliamentary general elections, two Northern Ireland Assembly elections, European Parliament and local government elections and the EU referendum. Transparency for these significant electoral events would make a difference in voter trust and confidence in the democratic process.

Contingency planning

In preparing this business plan, we are mindful of the changing nature of the political environment. We have ensured this plan encompasses appropriate flexibility to enable us to respond to unscheduled external events, recognising that we may need to reprioritise our work accordingly.

We maintain contingency plans to ensure we can respond to unscheduled electoral events, and have the expertise, experience and a proven track record of delivering well run polls at short notice, should this be required. We work closely with partner organisations, such as those with UK security responsibilities, in order to provide a joined up approach in relation to wider contingency planning.

Working across the UK

As a public body which works across all nations and regions of the UK, we take a flexible and proactive approach to suit the demands and requirements of different governments, legislatures and electorates. We are fully committed to the further devolutionary agenda and look forward to increased accountability to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales and to working with them and their respective governments as they develop their future electoral plans.

Following the Scotland Act 2016, responsibility for Scottish Parliament elections was transferred to the Scottish Parliament in May 2017. It already had this responsibility for local government elections. The Wales Act 2017 also provides for these responsibilities to be transferred to the National Assembly for Wales for their respective elections.

These changes trigger a further evolution in the ways we report on and are held accountable for our work in Scotland and Wales. We will continue working with the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales to establish this accountability in terms of both budget and operational delivery. We welcome the draft legislation which will enter both legislatures in 2019 as it will increase our accountability and transparency in those devolved nations.

Electoral law in Northern Ireland is not devolved, and remains the responsibility of the UK Government. We continue to work with the Northern Ireland Office and the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to ensure high standards in electoral administration.

Our plan for 2019-20

The following sections set out the work we will undertake in 2019-20 in order to continue our delivery of our strategic goals, and how we will measure our success in that delivery.

Goal 1

To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible.

Delivering well run electoral events

In 2019-20, we will:

- Support the planned electoral events in May 2019, which are local government, local Mayoral and combined authority Mayoral elections across parts of England, and Northern Ireland local government elections, and identify any lessons that should be learned for future elections.
- Prepare for the May 2020 scheduled electoral events, which are Mayor of London and London Assembly elections, local government elections, local Mayoral and combined authority Mayoral elections in parts of England, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections across England and Wales.
- Using our performance standards we will engage with local authorities and Returning Officers to support and challenge their delivery of electoral events.
- Develop and deliver guidance, resources and support for candidates, agents and Returning Officers for electoral events in May 2020.
- Invest in the delivery of further tranches of our modern, digital and more accessible guidance.
- Work with electoral administrators, campaigners and governments to identify opportunities to improve the accessibility of elections, so that everyone has equal access to the information and the processes they need to vote in elections and referendums.

Maximising electoral registration

We want to ensure that the UK's electoral registers support and enable effective participation in elections and referendums for all, and help to maximise electoral registration. In 2019-20, we will:

- Develop, agree and implement our approach to supporting and challenging Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to deliver well-run electoral registration services.
- Develop and deliver the necessary work-streams required to support the successful implementation of a reformed annual canvass process from 2020. This includes the delivery of redeveloped registration guidance and voter materials.
- Deliver effective, value for money voter registration campaigns across the UK ahead of the May 2020 polls.
- Develop and publish new performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers, in consultation with stakeholders from across the electoral community, to improve how we support and challenge them with maintaining accurate and complete electoral registers.
- Scrutinise any proposals brought forward by the UK's governments for changes to the franchise for elections or referendums, including any changes following the UK's exit from the European Union, to ensure they are workable for citizens and Electoral Registration Officers.
- Deliver guidance in a modern, more accessible format which supports the effective delivery of registration.
- Scrutinise proposals from the Northern Ireland Office and the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland to carry out an electoral registration canvass in autumn 2020, to ensure this will help to improve the completeness and accuracy of the electoral registers.

Tackling electoral fraud

Voters should be confident that fraud is deterred and detected. To support this in 2019-20 we will:

- Work with partners to run a further campaign, under our 'Your vote is yours alone' banner, to highlight to voters the risks of electoral fraud.
- Scrutinise any proposals brought forward by the UK's governments for changes to legislation on electoral fraud, including any changes to offences and sanctions proposed following the UK Government's Protecting the debate consultation, to ensure they are proportionate and workable.
- Publish data on alleged cases of electoral fraud reported during 2019, so that policy and policing responses for future elections are informed by a robust evidence base.
- Work closely with the Police and local authorities to provide training and review integrity plans to help prevent electoral fraud.

Modernising electoral registration

In 2019-20, we will:

- Publish our views on government proposals to reform the annual electoral registration canvass, to inform and support the UK's parliaments as they consider legislation ahead of the 2020 canvass.
- Support the implementation of canvass reform and continue to develop our approach to guidance and support working closely with the Cabinet Office, the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Scottish Assessors Association.

Goal 1 performance

Corporate plan and business plan performance measures

We publish 100% of guidance products on time with no substantive errors	We provide accurate advice to returning officers and electoral registration officers within three working days of receipt of the request	Additions to electoral registers during our public awareness campaigns meet or exceed our targets
We review 100% of integrity plans from local authorities identified to be at higher risk of fraud	We publish 100% of our reports to planned deadlines	We comment on 100% of relevant legislation and policy proposals

Impact indicators

No electors are served by returning officers or electoral registration officers who fail to meet our performance standards	Increasing public confidence in their understanding of and satisfaction with the system of registering to vote	Increasing public confidence in and satisfaction with the process of voting	The electoral registers in the UK maintain or improve current levels of accuracy and completeness
All votes cast are included in the count for elections in the UK (votes rejected is as close to 0% as possible)	100% of our election and registration reports are responded to by the relevant government	The results of elections are trusted and accepted (the number of successful legal challenges is as close to zero as possible)	100% of required legislation for scheduled polls is clear six months before it is required to be implemented with no errors identified

Key milestones

Publish our views on proposals to reform the annual canvass in Great Britain June 2019

Publication of the new performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers March 2020

Publish data on cases of alleged electoral fraud reported during 2019 March 2020

Goal 2

To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches

Ensuring transparency

Voters should be able to see and understand clearly how political parties and campaigners are funded and what they spend on campaigning. To support this in 2019-20, we will:

- Publish timely political finance information, including annual accounts from registered parties, information about donations and loans and details of campaign spending which parties and others are required to report to us.
- Register political parties and other campaigners in line with the law and publish an online database.
- Maintain this register, including reviewing all descriptions to ensure that voters can identify the party for which candidates are registered.
- Invest in a new online portal for party registration and finance with the aim of increasing usage of the site, and reducing paper transactions.
- Scrutinise any proposals for improved transparency for digital election and referendum campaigns, to ensure they will deliver benefits for voters and are workable for campaigners, and make appropriate proposals of our own. These may include political advertising archives from social media companies and legislation brought forward by the UK's governments to require imprints on digital campaign material.
- Continue to press the UK Government to provide us with the legal powers to publish information about donations and loans accepted by registered campaigners in Northern Ireland going back to January 2014, to ensure maximum transparency and confidence for voters there.

Good regulation

In 2019-20, we will:

- Provide high quality advice and guidance to support parties, candidates and campaigners to comply with the rules.

- Take action and, where appropriate, impose sanctions when the rules are broken in accordance with our Enforcement Policy. Where necessary we will defend legal challenges to our enforcement decisions. We will also continue to improve our compliance monitoring and real-time monitoring where we can intervene as an issue is identified.
- Develop, adopt, and commence use of a prosecution policy, which will define our ability to conduct criminal investigation and detail the prosecutory powers we might exercise.
- Develop new codes of practice for parties and candidates for the United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election scheduled for 2022 and for Wales and Scotland in time for planned elections in 2021.
- Continue to build the case for changes to legislation to strengthen our investigatory and sanctioning powers, including increasing the maximum fine we are able to impose for breaches of PPERA from the current level of £20,000, to ensure these are effective deterrents which can ensure compliance and enhance public confidence.
- Work with the National Assembly for Wales to review their Standing Orders and ensure they have a robust plan to develop new rules and guidance for the elections in 2021 and to bring dual reporting to an end.

Goal 2 performance

Corporate plan and business plan 2019-20 performance measures

We publish routine financial returns from parties and campaigners, including statements of accounts, within 30 working days to comply with statutory deadlines. (Target 100%)	We check a minimum of 25% of all financial returns for accuracy and compliance each year	We publish 100% of guidance products on time with no substantive errors	We provide accurate advice within five to 20 days of receipt of the request, depending on the complexity of the advice (Target 90%)
We notify applicants of the outcome of their registration applications within 30 days of a complete application 75% of the time	We conduct timely and proportionate investigations of which 90% are completed within 180 days	We issue 90% of final notices setting out our sanctions within 21 days of the deadline for representations. We publish the outcome of all of our investigations	We make timely regulatory recommendations that reflect the principles guiding our approach to effective regulatory framework

Impact indicators

Increasing public confidence that the spending and funding of political parties and candidates at UK elections is open and transparent	Increasing public confidence that action will be taken by the authorities if a campaigner is caught breaking the rules on campaign funding	All donations and loans for larger parties are accurate and comply with the rules and are submitted on time	All campaign spending returns are accurate and comply with the rules and are submitted on time
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Key milestones

Prosecutions Policy consultation complete	April 2019
Prosecutions Policy adopted	June 2019
PFR Online launched	January 2020
Complete review of registered descriptions	March 2020
New Standing Orders for Wales finalised	January 2020
Codes of Practice presented to relevant ministers	
• UK Parliamentary General Election	May 2019
• Scotland and Wales	Feb 2020

Goal 3

To be an independent and respected centre of expertise using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age

Innovation and development

In 2019-20, we will:

- Evaluate the UK Government's new pilot schemes testing polling station voter identification at the May 2019 local elections, to identify evidence that will be needed to develop an accessible and proportionate model for future elections in Great Britain.
- Report in detail on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers in the UK.
- Conclude our feasibility study project on options for modernising electoral registration, identifying which options are most likely to provide benefits for citizens and Electoral Registration Officers and improve the accuracy and completeness of electoral registers.
- Begin scoping work on a project to understand the needs and expectations of voters and consider options for improving the accessibility of voting processes in the UK so that everyone has equal access to the information and the processes they need to vote in elections and referendums.
- Provide the Scottish and Welsh Governments and Parliaments with independent expert advice on legislative and policy changes arising from their respective electoral reform agendas, to ensure that they reflect voters' interests and are workable in practice.
- Continue to encourage and work with the UK's governments to identify opportunities to simplify, modernise and consolidate electoral law, including implementing the Law Commissions' 2016 recommendations, to reduce the risk of confusion and error in electoral administration and regulation and improve confidence in the security and integrity of future elections.

Goal 3 performance

Corporate plan and business plan 2018-19 performance measures

Deliver a project to understand the landscape of public democratic engagement in the UK

Deliver a project to develop and explore the feasibility of proposals to modernise electoral registration and meet voters' needs and expectations in our digital society

Publish our evaluation and response to the 2019 voter ID pilots

Work in support of the electoral law reform recommendations from the England and Wales, Scotland and the Northern Ireland Law Commissions

Impact indicator

Our expert evidence and views are referenced in public debate about our democratic system and processes, and government proposals reflect our priorities and recommendations for change.

Key milestones

Conclude our feasibility study project on options for modernising electoral registration

July 2019

Publish our evaluation of the 2019 voter identification pilot schemes

August 2019

Conclude scoping phase of a project to understand the needs and expectations of voters

December 2019

Goal 4

To deliver excellent value for money, achieving more with less and getting it right first time; making best use of our resources and expertise to deliver services that are attuned to what matters most to voters and legislators

Supporting the organisation

Key to our success over the next year and beyond is ensuring we have the right services in place to support the delivery of this ambitious work programme. This includes providing consistently high quality HR, finance, planning, support, facilities and ICT functions. In 2019-20, we will:

- Launch a new corporate website which significantly improves our digital services, meets users' needs more effectively, and provides information in easy to use and fully accessible ways.
- Develop and implement a new people strategy, to support the best use of our resources, current and future. This will include further improving alignment with the Commission values and with the Corporate Plan, as well as work to promote a culture where staff teams are best able to perform their roles effectively.
- Work closely with the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly to manage and develop an operational model that allows us to report and account to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales, thereby increasing our accountability and transparency in those areas.
- Implement new tools to deliver efficiencies and enhanced transparency for key corporate functions such as procurement, performance and governance.
- Revisit and refresh our project management procedures so that they support effective delivery of change.
- Plan and deliver the objectives of the Ways of Working project including changes to our accommodation strategy, developing our working practices to reflect the expectations on a modern employer and ensure that the core ICT offering can support these changes.
- Ensure the resilience of our digital and IT infrastructure against cyber threats through a programme of testing, upgrades and benchmarking against appropriate standards
- Implement upgrades and improvements to our IT systems that support our regulatory and electoral administration processes.
- Ensure system development and digital transformation are supported by information governance best practice and regulatory compliance.

Goal 4 performance

Corporate plan and business plan performance measures

Learn practical lessons from current home and remote working practices and design future accommodation accordingly.	Identify options, costs and benefits of e-procurement and implement a new system accordingly.
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Stakeholder and staff satisfaction with IT tools	Maintaining high staff engagement scores in the annual staff survey and ensuring indicators such as staff turnover are at appropriate levels	Monitoring significant variances on all budgets and where appropriate reducing these variances over the five-years of this plan
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Key milestones

Launch of corporate website	June 2019
Revised Publication Scheme launched	June 2019
Accommodation and Technology strategies updated	July 2019
E-procurement platform launched	December 2019
Project management procedure change implemented	March 2020
People Strategy launched	March 2020
Governance and planning systems live	March 2020

Organisation and resources

Trained, skilled people are the most significant resource requirement for the Commission. We also need to invest in facilities, systems and external resources so that staff can work to the best of their abilities and focus on delivery of the Commission's plans.

Planned capital expenditure in 2019-20 is £990,000. This includes a significant investment in the Commission's online Party Finance and Regulation portal used by stakeholders to maintain their organisational details and report their financial returns to the Commission. The capital plan also includes investments to update the Commission's websites and replace aging business systems and infrastructure.

In addition to the Commission's operational costs, we continue to administer the policy development grant scheme that provides for £2,000,000 of grants to be paid to eligible political parties to assist in developing policies for inclusion in their manifestos.

Overall our spending plans for 2019-20 have increased from 2018-19 by £1.772m, mainly to cover investment in a small number of extra front line staff and supporting infrastructure, in particular to help the Commission address the new challenges of the digital age. This figure also includes £487k to represent the Commission's share of a mandated increase in pension contributions across government. It also includes £110k in order to support government initiatives across the UK, including canvass reform and ID pilots in England and the electoral reform agendas of the Scottish and Welsh Governments.

The investment we are making to help deliver our corporate plan includes £130k of capital investment deferred from 2018-19 and £127k brought forward from 2020-21. These will deliver significant improvements in our IT infrastructure and digital working capability. We are progressing delivery of the planned new, online regulatory system for political finance making political finance processes easier for parties and campaigners and our work more transparent through a new public search tool for political finance data on our new website. We will also be rolling out modernised guidance on-line, helping parties, campaigners and electoral administrators, improving compliance and making it easier and less resource intensive to maintain.

Our spending plans for 2019-20

Our spending plans for 2019-20 are summarised in the tables below.

Planned spending on business delivery

	Resource £m	Income £m	Capital £m	Total £m
Electoral events				
Event pay	0.593			0.593
Elections - May 2019 (England & NI)	0.679			0.679
Elections - May 2020 (England & Police and Crime Commissioners)	0.880			0.880
UK Parliamentary General Election - June 2017	0.003			0.003
European Parliamentary Election - contingency	0.686			0.686
Event projects	0.742	-0.085		0.657
Other business delivery				
Pay	8.447			8.447
Rent & Rates	1.089			1.089
ICT & other non-pay	2.141	-0.016		2.125
Depreciation	0.494			0.494
Provisions	0.115			0.115
Total business delivery	15.869	-0.101		15.768

Planned spending on further operational costs

	Resource £m	Income £m	Capital £m	Total £m
Improvement projects	0.166		0.990	1.155
Development projects	0.020			0.020

Planned spending on other costs

	Resource £m	Income £m	Capital £m	Total £m
Additional mandated pension contributions				0.487
Policy Development Grants				2.000

Planned total spending in 2019-20

	Resource £m	Income £m	Capital £m	Total £m
Total spending plans	16.054	-0.101	0.990	19.430

The funded establishment for **2019-20 is 155.91 FTE** (2018/19: 147.47 FTE).

The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. We work to promote public confidence in the democratic process and ensure its integrity.