

POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUMS ACT 2000



THE SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

THIRD REPORT 2020

Re-appointment of a Nominated Electoral Commissioner

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Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000*

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The Speaker's Committee

The Speaker's Committee is appointed in accordance with the provisions of section 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 to perform the functions conferred on it by that Act.

Membership

[Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP](#), Speaker of the House of Commons (Chair)

[Mr Simon Clarke MP](#), Minister of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

[Rt Hon Michael Gove MP](#), Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

[Craig Mackinlay MP](#)

[Christian Matheson MP](#)

[Karl McCartney MP](#)

[Cat Smith MP](#)

[Owen Thompson MP](#)

[William Wragg MP](#), Chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee

Previous Publications

Second Report 2020 was published 21 July 2020 as HC 626 of Session 2019–21

First Report 2020 was published 21 April 2020 as HC 277 of Session 2019–21

First Report 2019 was published 8 July 2019 as HC 2513 of Session 2019

Fourth Report 2018 was published 28 November 2018 as HC 1786 of Session 2017–19

Third Report 2018 was published 15 November 2018 as HC 1727 of Session 2017–19

Second Report 2018 was published 24 October 2018 as HC 1639 of Session 2017–19

First Report 2018 was published 14 March 2018 as HC 901 of Session 2017–19

First Report 2017 was published 27 February 2017 as HC 1031 of Session 2016–17

Second Report 2017 was published 6 November 2017 as HC 535 of Session 2017–19

Third Report 2017 was published 14 December 2017 as HC 688 of Session 2017–19

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Re-appointment of an Electoral Commissioner

1. The Electoral Commission was established by Parliament as a body independent of Government. The Chair of the Electoral Commission and the other Electoral Commissioners are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen, following an Address from the House of Commons. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (“the 2000 Act”), as amended by the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009 (“the 2009 Act”), provides for the Electoral Commission to have nine or ten Commissioners. The Commission comprises:

- Up to six ‘ordinary’ Commissioners who are subject to restrictions on political activity and who are recruited by competition, under a procedure put in place and overseen by the Speaker’s Committee, and
- Four ‘nominated’ commissioners, who are persons put forward by the registered leader of a qualifying party for consideration for appointment.²

The current term of office of Alasdair Morgan, a ‘nominated’ Commissioner, expires on 30 September 2020.

2. The Speaker’s Committee on the Electoral Commission is required by section 3 of the 2000 Act, as amended by the 2009 Act, to oversee the procedure for selecting candidates for appointment to the Electoral Commission. Under section 3(5A), this duty encompasses the recommendation of candidates for re-appointment (or further re-appointment) to the Electoral Commission. There is no presumption in the statute either for or against re-appointment.

Alasdair Morgan

3. Alasdair Morgan is currently serving as the Electoral Commissioner nominated by the Scottish National Party (SNP) as the third largest party in the House of Commons. Mr Morgan’s four-year term ends on 30 September 2020. He had an immediately prior term of two years as the nominated Commissioner for the ‘smaller parties’, having been nominated and appointed to this position before the SNP became the third largest party.

4. At our meeting in March 2020, we considered a letter from the Chair of the Electoral Commission, Sir John Holmes, recommending that Mr Morgan be re-appointed for a further period of two years subject to his re-nomination by the Leader of the SNP and this Committee supporting his re-appointment. The Chair of the Commission described Mr Morgan as “an assiduous and hard-working Commissioner, and a committed and effective part of our collective consideration of important electoral issues”. Sir John also pointed to Mr Morgan’s work as a member of the Commission’s Audit Committee.

5. At the same meeting, we also considered a letter from Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Leader of the SNP, indicating that she was content to re-nominate Mr Morgan. Having deliberated upon this re-nomination and noting the positive appraisal from the Chair of the Commission, we agreed to put forward Mr Morgan’s name for statutory consultation with the leaders of the qualifying political parties.

Statutory consultation

6. Section 3(2)(b) of the 2000 Act, as amended, also requires that the proposal to appoint (or re-appoint) a member of the Electoral Commission be the subject of consultation with the registered leader of each registered party to which two or more Members of the House of Commons belong. The Speaker accordingly wrote to the leaders of the qualifying parties in May 2020. No objections were raised to Mr Morgan's re-appointment.

7. Appointments to the Electoral Commission are made by Her Majesty on an Address from the House of Commons. We commend to the House the re-appointment of Alasdair Morgan for a two-year term.