

Political Parties, Elections and Referendums
Act 2000



The Speaker

**Speaker's Committee on the
Electoral Commission**

Second Report of 2025

Re-appointment of the Chair of the Electoral
Commission

Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission

The Speaker's Committee is a statutory body whose role is defined by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, as amended by the Elections Act 2022, and the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. The work of the Committee relates to the Electoral Commission and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The Committee reviews the annual estimates of the resources the Electoral Commission and LGBCE, in order to ensure they are consistent with the economical, efficient and effective discharge of their functions. It also considers the two organisations' five-year plans.

The Speaker's Committee oversees the recruitment processes for the Chair of the Electoral Commission, Electoral Commissioners and the Chair of the LGBCE. The candidates for these posts are then approved by the House of Commons and appointed by the King.

The Speaker's Committee also has the power to examine the performance by the Electoral Commission of the Commission's duty to have regard to a Strategy and Policy Statement. The Committee is one of the three bodies the Government is statutorily required to consult before the Secretary of State can lay a Strategy and Policy Statement for Parliament's approval.

Current membership

[Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP](#) (Speaker; Chorley) (Chair)

[Rushanara Ali MP](#) (Labour; Bethnal Green and Stepney)

[Florence Eshalomi MP](#) (Labour; Vauxhall and Camberwell Green)

[Stephen Gethins MP](#) (Scottish National Party; Arbroath and Broughty Ferry)

[Simon Hoare MP](#) (Conservative; North Dorset)

[Rachel Hopkins MP](#) (Labour; Luton South and South Bedfordshire)

[Jim McMahon MP](#) (Labour; Oldham West, Chadderton and Royton)

[Rt Hon. Angela Rayner MP](#) (Labour; Ashton-under-Lyne)

[Lisa Smart MP](#) (Liberal Democrat; Hazel Grove)

[Rt Hon. Sir Jeremy Wright KC MP](#) (Conservative; Kenilworth and Southam)

Powers

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

Publication

Presented to the House of Commons pursuant to paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 2 to Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

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Committee reports are published on the Committee's [website](#) and in print by Order of the House.

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Re-appointment of the Chair of the Electoral Commission

Introduction

1. Mr John Pullinger CB was appointed Chair of the Electoral Commission for a four-year term, beginning on 1 May 2021. This term of appointment ends on 30 April 2025.
2. Parliament established the Electoral Commission as a body independent of Government. The Chair of the Electoral Commission and the other Electoral Commissioners are appointed by His Majesty the King, following an Address from the House of Commons.
3. The Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, which is appointed under section 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, is required by section 3 of the Act, as amended by the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009, to put in place and oversee the procedure for selecting candidates for appointment to the Electoral Commission.
4. Electoral Commissioners and the chair of the Commission may be re-appointed (or further re-appointed) under section 3(5) of the Act. Under section 3(5A) of the Act, the Speaker's Committee's duty in respect of the selection of candidates for appointment encompasses the recommendation of candidates for re-appointment.

Consideration for re-appointment

5. While appointments to the Electoral Commission do not fall to be monitored by the Office of the Commissioner of Public Appointments (OCPA) the Speaker's Committee seeks to act in accordance with the principles set out for appointments within the Commissioner's remit.
6. OCPA's code of practice for Ministerial appointments to public bodies permits re-appointments to public bodies and to statutory offices where these are made in accordance with the relevant statutes. The provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, as amended,

concerning appointments and re-appointments to the Electoral Commission are set out above. The OCPA code also requires that any re-appointment be preceded by a satisfactory performance appraisal.

7. In July 2024, John Pullinger wrote to the Speaker regarding the procedures for re-appointing and recruiting Electoral Commissioners. At this time Mr Pullinger noted that he was approaching the end of his four-year term as a Commissioner and indicated that he would be happy to continue for a second four-year term if the Speaker's Committee saw fit for him to do so.
8. We therefore decided to seek feedback on Mr Pullinger's performance during his first term so that we could consider how well he had fulfilled the role.¹ As such, we sought feedback from the Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission; the nine other serving Electoral Commissioners; two former Electoral Commissioners; the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly; the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament; the Chair of the Llywydd's Committee of the Welsh Parliament; the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution; the Chair of the Society of Local Government Chief Executives and Senior Managers; and the Chief Executive of the Association of Electoral Administrators.
9. Overall, the responses to our request for feedback gave us a positive impression of the way John Pullinger has carried out the role as chair of the Electoral Commission. They suggested he had succeeded in developing an environment in which the Commission was effectively fulfilling its role as a regulator, with him offering leadership, integrity and commitment in supporting the delivery of democracy. Under his chairmanship, it appeared that the Commission had addressed some key issues around governance leading to a stronger, more cohesive organisation. It was noted that the Chair had formed a strong relationship with the new chief executive officer which would be of benefit to the Commission over the coming period.
10. Mr Pullinger's term as chair has been one of extensive activity for the Commission. He has led the Commission through the General, local, Police and Crime Commissioners, Northern Ireland Assembly, Senedd and Scottish Parliamentary elections. He has also overseen the Commission's response to, and implementation of, the Elections Act 2022, which resulted in considerable changes to the Electoral Commission's work.
11. We were told that since his appointment, Mr Pullinger has presided over a Commission that had continued to become more understanding and supportive of the pressures faced by those who administer and participate in elections. This had been particularly noticeable in 2024 with the sudden and unexpected announcement of the UK Parliamentary general election.

1 The role specification is set out in the appendix below.

Similarly, the Chair's determination to address issues faced by electoral administrators in delivering safe and trusted elections was drawn to our attention.

12. The majority of those who have worked closely with Mr Pullinger found him to be incredibly knowledgeable, both in terms of his remit and grasp of the wider context in which the Commission operates. They also drew attention to his professionalism and diligence in carrying out his responsibilities.
13. Section 3(2)(b) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, 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 then belong. Mr Speaker accordingly wrote to the leaders of the qualifying parties on 6 March 2025 about the re-appointment of Mr Pullinger. No objections or concerns were made by the party leaders in response to the Speaker's consultation.
14. Having deliberated upon this feedback, we are satisfied as to John Pullinger's effectiveness and the contribution he will continue to make to the work of the Electoral Commission. We consider he continues to be a good fit against all the criteria listed in the role and person specification. **We are therefore content to recommend that John Pullinger be re-appointed for a further term of four years. We commend his re-appointment to the House.**

Appendix: Role description

This role will suit an inspiring senior leader with experience working independently and commanding confidence at the highest levels, and proven success operating in a complex environment. They will be an impartial, independent, professional individual of the highest integrity.

Principal responsibilities

1. Lead the development of the Commission's strategy, working closely with Commissioners, the Chief Executive and the executive team and ensuring appropriate resources and governance arrangements are in place and monitored;
2. Act as an advocate for the Commission, promoting its and voters' interests accessibly and transparently to the stakeholders, the media, and the general public;
3. Chair the Electoral Commission board, ensuring it is effective in setting the direction of the Electoral Commission and providing challenge and support to the executive leadership;
4. Ensure that Commissioners fulfil their duties and responsibilities and that their skills and experience are appropriately deployed;
5. Lead the appraisal of the Chief Executive, holding them and the executive team to account for the performance of the Electoral Commission;
6. Represent the Commission when appropriate in senior high-level dealings with UK, devolved and local government, political parties, the Speaker's Committee, devolved legislatures, overseas Electoral Commissions and international bodies and other stakeholders and interested groups;
7. Ensure the Commission welcomes and promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in its workforce and functions;
8. Ensure efficient and effective use of public funds and that the Commission operates within the limits of its statutory authority;
9. Take responsibility as Chief Counting Officer for the conduct of any UK-wide, and possibly national or regional referendum.

Person specification

The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate substantial relevant experience and achievements in order to show their competence for this role.

Essential criteria

- Demonstrable ability to lead and shape the strategic direction of a complex and changing organisation in a non-executive role, providing effective support and challenge to the executive team in an evolving context;
- Ability to chair a high-level board, by engaging in debate, drawing out insight, and contributing to processes that reach clear and supported conclusions, while respecting the boundaries between executive and non-executive responsibilities;
- Ability to provide visible and authoritative leadership, and to act with confidence and credibility in an environment subject to intense scrutiny;
- Excellent communications skills, including the ability to communicate effectively with a variety of groups across a range of different channels;
- Ability to exercise sound judgement, and to grasp and interpret complex issues quickly, to develop innovative solutions to new problems, and to provide impartial, objective and pragmatic advice;
- Ability to maintain independence and command the confidence of a wide range of stakeholders in a complex environment;
- Strong understanding of and commitment to enabling diversity, equality, and inclusion in the context of the Electoral Commission's work, and a track record of supporting positive outcomes in this area.
- Understanding of the UK-wide political context in which the Electoral Commission operates.

Personal qualities and attributes

- Absolute honesty, integrity and probity and a commitment to the Seven Principles of Public Life;
- The resilience required to work in an environment of close media, public, and political scrutiny;

- Consistency and fairness;
- Ability to instil a culture that reflects the Electoral Commission's values: Making an Impact; Engaged; Authoritative; Independent; Transparent.

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

| Number | Title | Reference |
|--------|---|-----------|
| 1st | Re-appointment of an Electoral Commissioner | HC 740 |