

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 22 JANUARY 2020 IN THE SPEAKER'S STUDY**

Mr Speaker, in the Chair	
Karl McCartney	Christian Matheson
Craig Mackinlay	Bridget Phillipson

Apologies: Oliver Dowden, Owen Thompson

(Private)

1. Declaration of interests

Members declared their interests as listed in the [Register of Members' Financial interests as at 11 January 2020](#).

2. Committee spokesperson

Mr Speaker informed the Committee that he had asked Bridget Phillipson to continue acting as spokesperson.

3. Consideration of formal minutes of previous meeting

The Committee agreed the minutes without modification.

4. Discussion with Electoral Commission

Bob Posner, Chief Executive, and Kieran Rix, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Electoral Commission, were questioned on the Commission's Supplementary Estimate for 2019-20.

5. Electoral Commission Supplementary Estimate 2019-20

The Committee agreed the Electoral Commission's Supplementary Estimate for 2019-20, subject to the removal of £220,000 included for possible elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly, which was no longer required.

6. Electoral Commission designation of posts

The Committee agreed to a proposal from the Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission to extend the designation of posts under paragraph 11B of Schedule 1 to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

[The Committee adjourned

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 24 MARCH 2020 IN THE SPEAKER'S STUDY**

Mr Speaker, in the Chair	
Karl McCartney	Bridget Phillipson
Christian Matheson	

Apologies: Michael Gove, Craig Mackinlay, Owen Thompson

(Private)

1. Minutes of last meeting

The Committee agreed the minutes without modification.

2. Local Government Boundary Commission for England Main Estimate 2020-21 and five-year plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

The Committee noted the changes to the LGBCE Estimate arising as a result of revisions to Treasury accounting guidance. It considered the advice provided by the Treasury and agreed the revised Estimate and five-year plan as being consistent with the Commission's economical, efficient and effective discharge of its functions.

3. Electoral Commission Main Estimate 2020-21 and five-year plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

The Committee noted the letter the Speaker had received from the Minister for the Constitution and Devolution. The Committee agreed to seek further information from the Electoral Commission about its plans to increase its capacity for prosecutions.

The Committee considered the advice provided by the Treasury and agreed the Estimate and five-year plan as being consistent with the Commission's economical, efficient and effective discharge of its functions.

4. Committee Annual Report 2018-19

The Committee agreed its Annual Report for 2018-19.

5. National Audit Office reports on the Electoral Commission and Local Government Boundary Commission for England

The Committee considered the reports produced by the National Audit Office on the Electoral Commission and Local Government Boundary Commission for England. It agreed that thanks should be passed to the NAO for their work on the reports, and that the NAO should be given permission to publish them.

6. Appointments to the Electoral Commission and Local Government Boundary Commission for England

The Committee considered correspondence from the Chief Executive and Chair of the Electoral Commission and the Chief Executive of the LGBCE. It agreed to a number of steps in relation to forthcoming appointments:

- The Committee agreed to seek written feedback on the performance of the Chairs of the LGBCE and Electoral Commission before considering whether they should be recommended for reappointment.
- The Committee agreed to recommend Alasdair Morgan for reappointment as the SNP-nominated Electoral Commissioner and to commence a process of consultation with the leaders of registered political parties.
- The Committee agreed to put in place a process for the appointment of the Electoral Commissioner for the smaller parties.
- The Committee agreed to consult the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales respectively on the potential re-appointment of the lead Commissioners for Scotland and Wales.
- The Committee agreed to put in place a process for the recruitment of a lead Commissioner for Northern Ireland.

7. Appointments to the Electoral Commission and Local Government Boundary Commission for England

The Committee came to the following resolution—

That the Committee may take decisions by email correspondence, provided that: a) proposed decisions are first sent by email to all members of the Committee; and b) members of the Committee are given 24 hours from the email being sent to object to any proposed decision.

[The Committee adjourned]

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

On 11 May, Mr Speaker appointed Christian Matheson as Committee spokesperson, in place of Bridget Philipson who had ceased to be a member of the Committee.

On 23 June, Mr Speaker proposed to the Committee by email the appointment of the following panels to carry out the selection processes and report back on appointable candidates:

Recruitment panel for lead Electoral Commissioner for Northern Ireland

Chair of the panel: Dolores O'Reilly

Members: Sir John Holmes, Christian Matheson MP, Mr William Wragg MP

Recruitment panel for Electoral Commissioner for the Smaller Parties

Chair of the panel: Philippa Helme CB

Members: Sir John Holmes, Christian Matheson MP, Mr William Wragg MP

No objections were received to Mr Speaker's proposal. In accordance with the Committee's resolution of 24 March 2020, Mr Speaker's proposal was therefore agreed to.

It was subsequently proposed that Karl McCartney replace Mr William Wragg on the panel to appoint the Commissioner for the Smaller Parties. No objections were raised, and Karl McCartney was therefore appointed to the panel.

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 16 JULY 2020 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Mr Speaker, in the Chair	
Simon Clarke	Cat Smith
Karl McCartney	Owen Thompson
Craig Mackinlay	Mr William Wragg
Christian Matheson	

(Private)

1. Declarations of interests

Simon Clarke, Cat Smith, Owen Thompson and Mr William Wragg declared their interests as listed in the [Register of Members' Financial Interests as at 6 July 2020](#). Owen Thompson additionally declared that his partner was a councillor in Scotland.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The Committee agreed the minutes without modification.

3. Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

The Committee considered a draft report commending to the House of Commons the reappointment of Professor Colin Mellors OBE as Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for a further period of five years. Mr Speaker asked each member in turn whether they were content for the report to be laid before the House:

Aye

Simon Clarke
Karl McCartney
Craig Mackinlay
Christian Matheson
Cat Smith
Owen Thompson
Mr William Wragg

It was therefore agreed that the Committee would lay before the House a report recommending the reappointment of Professor Colin Mellors for a further period of five years.

4. Electoral Commissioner nominated by the Scottish National Party

The Committee considered a draft report commending to the House of Commons the reappointment of Alasdair Morgan as a nominated Electoral Commissioner for a further period of two years. Mr Speaker asked each member in turn whether they were content for the report to be laid before the House:

Aye

Simon Clarke
Karl McCartney
Craig Mackinlay
Christian Matheson
Cat Smith
Owen Thompson
Mr William Wragg

5. Lead Electoral Commissioner for Scotland

The Committee considered whether to recommend Dame Sue Bruce for reappointment as the lead Electoral Commissioner for Scotland for a further period of three years. It noted an appraisal of Dame Sue's performance by the Chair of the Electoral Commission and a letter from the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament.

Mr Speaker asked each member in turn whether they were content to recommend Dame Sue for reappointment on the basis proposed, subject to the statutory consultation with party leaders:

Aye

Simon Clarke
Karl McCartney
Craig Mackinlay
Christian Matheson
Cat Smith
Owen Thompson
Mr William Wragg

It was therefore agreed that the Committee would recommend Dame Sue for reappointment for a further term of three years, subject to the statutory consultation with the party leaders.

6. Lead Electoral Commissioner for Wales

The Committee considered whether to recommend Dame Elan Closs Stephens for reappointment as the lead Electoral Commissioner for Scotland for a further period of four years. It noted an appraisal of Dame Elan's performance by the Chair of the Electoral Commission and a letter from the Llywydd of Senedd Cymru.

Mr Speaker asked each member in turn whether they were content to recommend Dame Elan for reappointment on the basis proposed, subject to the statutory consultation with party leaders:

Aye

Simon Clarke
Karl McCartney
Craig Mackinlay
Christian Matheson
Cat Smith
Owen Thompson
Mr William Wragg

It was therefore agreed that the Committee would recommend Dame Elan for reappointment for a further term of four years, subject to the statutory consultation with the party leaders.

7. Chair of the Electoral Commission

The Committee considered whether to recommend Sir John Holmes for re-appointment as Chair of the Electoral Commission. It noted feedback gathered by Mr Speaker from serving Commissioners, former Commissioners, the Chief Executive and a key stakeholder.

Mr Speaker asked each member in turn whether they were content to recommend Sir John for reappointment:

No

Simon Clarke
Karl McCartney
Craig Mackinlay
Mr William Wragg

It was therefore agreed not to recommend Sir John Holmes for reappointment.

Mr Speaker then proposed a procedure for selecting a new Chair of the Electoral Commission. This procedure would involve the Committee delegating to Mr Speaker the appointment of a panel to carry out a recruitment competition and to report back on appointable candidates. Mr Speaker asked each member whether they were content to put in place this procedure:

Aye

Simon Clarke
Karl McCartney
Craig Mackinlay
Christian Matheson
Cat Smith
Owen Thompson
Mr William Wragg

The procedure, as proposed, was therefore agreed to.

8. Update on other appointments

The Committee noted the ongoing recruitment processes for a lead Electoral Commissioner for Northern Ireland and the Electoral Commissioner for the smaller parties.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

[The Committee adjourned]

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2020 IN THE SPEAKER'S STUDY AND
VIRTUALLY VIA MS TEAMS**

Mr Speaker, in the Chair (items 1 and 2, and part of item 3)	
Karl McCartney (virtual)	Luke Hall
Craig Mackinlay	Cat Smith
Christian Matheson	Owen Thompson
Michael Gove	Mr William Wragg

(Private)

1. Declarations of interests

Michael Gove and Luke Hall declared interests as listed in the Register of Members' Financial Interests as at 14 September 2020.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The Committee agreed the minutes without modification.

3. Electoral Commission devolved funding arrangements

Bob Posner, Chief Executive, and Kieran Rix, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Electoral Commission, briefed the Committee on proposals for part of the Electoral Commission's funding to be provided by Senedd Cymru and the Scottish Parliament with effect from the 2021-22 financial year.

Mr Speaker left the meeting and Christian Matheson was called to the Chair.

Christian Matheson reported back on a meeting he had held with the Deputy Presiding Officer of Senedd Cymru.

4. Electoral Commissioner nominated by the smaller parties

The Committee agreed to recommend Alexander Attwood for appointment as Electoral Commissioner for the smaller parties, subject to the statutory consultation with party leaders.

The Committee agreed to recommend that Mr Attwood be appointed for a three-year term.

All members present assented to this proposal.

5. Electoral Commissioners with responsibility for Scotland and Wales

The Committee considered the outcome of the statutory consultation on the re-appointment of Dame Sue Bruce as lead Electoral Commissioner for Scotland, and Dame Elan Closs Stephens as lead Electoral Commissioner for Wales.

It agreed to lay before the House a report commending Dame Susan's re-appointment for a further three years, and Dame Elan's re-appointment for a further four years.

All members present assented to this proposal.

6. Chair of the Electoral Commission

The Committee noted the panel Mr Speaker had appointed to select candidates for the post of Chair of the Electoral Commission.

The Committee agreed that the panel should be asked to provide Mr Speaker with a ranked list of appointable candidates. The Committee also asked the panel to review and sign off the job description and person specification.

The Committee agreed to appoint GatenbySanderson as consultants to assist with the search.

The Committee agreed that it would hold a public session with its preferred candidate before deciding whether to recommend their appointment to the House.

7. Annual report 2019-20

The Committee agreed its annual report for 2019-20 and asked that it be laid before the House.

8. Any other business

There was no other business.

[The Committee adjourned]

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

On 11 December, the Committee was consulted on two proposals:

- 1) That a report be laid before the House recommending that Alexander Attwood be appointed to the Committee for a three-year term. The Committee was informed that no objections had been raised to the appointment in the statutory consultation with qualifying party leaders.
- 2) That the contents of a reply from Mr Speaker to the Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission be approved. The letter agreed with Mr Posner's suggestion that the submission of a revised strategy by the Electoral Commission await the appointment of the new chair

No objection was received to either proposal. In accordance with the Committee's resolution of 24 March 2020, the proposals were therefore agreed to.