

## Written evidence from Toby Price (TEC 28)

### Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee The Work of the Electoral Commission inquiry

As we have seen only too clearly in the US, where appalling practices have been used to manipulate the US electorate, it is vital that elections are seen to be fair. Otherwise, voters may become polarised by the media and by unscrupulous politicians and acceptance of results in the UK will diminish.

I am making this submission as a member of the electorate because I fear this future for the UK.

I believe an independent Electoral Commission's powers need to be strengthened to provide a rigorous oversight of the UK's electoral system. We need this not only to hold onto a trusted voting system within the UK, but also in relation to our standing in the world. We can learn many lessons from the US.

I am concerned about news stories saying the powers of the Electoral Commission will diminish with respect to regulation of finances and forms of publication across multiple platforms including social media.

I have considered the questions posed, on which the Parliamentary Committee has invited evidence and specifically the issues/questions:

*The effectiveness of the Electoral Commission in discharging its statutory obligation a) What roles and functions within the UK electoral system should the Commission perform? b) Should the remit of the Electoral Commission be changed? c) What powers should the Electoral Commission have? Should the existing powers of the Electoral Commission be changed?*

*The governance of the Electoral Commission*

*Public and political confidence in the impartiality and ability of the Electoral Commission*

*The international reputation of and comparators for the UK Electoral Commission*

*What, if any, reforms of the Electoral Commission should be considered?*

**For my own evidence, I ask the Committee to take full account of the reports produced by the Electoral Commission itself in the last 5 years, together with those produced by and/or published by the Electoral Reform Society ("ERS") in the same period.**

<https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/?s=report+on+2019+election>

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/uk-general-elections/report-overview-2019-uk-parliamentary-general-election>

These contain clear evidence and include sound and practical recommendations, which should be given their full weight in the Committee's deliberations.

The Commission is in the best position to know what has worked well and what has not, and why. I support its recommendations and conclusions.

Good governance is a vital cog of our society. Please do not reduce the independent ability of the Electoral Commission to provide this.

*November 2020*