

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 7 MARCH 2012 AT 3.00 pm
SPEAKER'S STUDY**

Present:

Rt Hon John Bercow, Speaker (<i>ex officio</i>), in the Chair	
Sam Gyimah MP	Naomi Long MP
Rt. Hon. Sir Gerald Kaufman MP	Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP

Apologies: Rt Hon. Nick Clegg MP (*ex officio*), Bridget Phillipson MP [maternity leave], Mr Gary Streeter MP.

1. Consideration of minutes of the meeting on 14 December 2011

The formal and informal minutes of the meeting on 14 December were agreed.

1. 2. Appointment of Commissioners

The Committee considered this matter

(i) Nominated Commissioner for the smaller parties

The Speaker had written to the qualifying parties to invite nominations, in accordance with statute. Only one response had been received, from Plaid Cymru, for the re-nomination of Mr Reid.

It was agreed that the Chair of the Electoral Commission should be asked to provide an assessment of Mr Reid's performance as an Electoral Commissioner and of his suitability for re-appointment.

(ii) Commissioner with a special interest in Scotland

The Committee considered an appraisal by Jenny Watson, dated 24 January, of the performance of John McCormick, Commissioner with a special interest in Scotland.

The Committee agreed that it was content to recommend Mr McCormick's re-appointment for four years, up to 31 December 2016, subject to the necessary statutory consultation.

(iii) Chair of the Electoral Commission

It was agreed that the Committee should require an appraisal of Jenny Watson's performance as a basis for considering a recommendation for her re-appointment.

The Committee would consider by correspondence a proposal to appoint an individual to appraise Ms Watson's performance.

The Committee agreed that it was content with the Electoral Commission's proposed budget for an appraisal, of £3000.

(iv) Commissioner for Wales

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee agreed to initiate a competition for the recruitment of a new Electoral Commissioner with a special interest in Wales.

The Committee agreed the job description and person specification provided by the Electoral Commission for the post.

The Committee agreed that it wished to appoint the following individuals to the independent panel to oversee the process:

Dame Denise Platt, to take the Chair
Gary Streeter MP, spokesman of the Speaker's Committee
Jenny Watson, chair of the Electoral Commission.

The Committee considered a proposal to appoint an Independent Public Appointments Assessor to the panel. It was agreed that the Secretary should seek from OCPA the name of an individual with a strong connection to Wales.

(a) Budget proposal

It was agreed that the Commission should be asked to review the proposed budget for the competition and to submit it to the Committee again.

2. Work of the Committee in 2011

The Committee agreed its First Report 2012, on the Work of the Committee in 2011.

3. Electoral Commission: designation of posts under paragraph 11(b) of Schedule 1 to the PPERA 2000

The Committee considered a letter from the Electoral Commission's Chief Executive formally consulting the Committee on a proposal to alter his designation of posts under paragraph 11(b) of Schedule 1 to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

The Committee agreed that it was content with the Chief Executive's proposal.

4. Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Second Report of the Committee 2012)

The Committee agreed to publish the reports for 2012 of the Comptroller and Auditor General on the Electoral Commission and LGBCE, appended to its Second Report 2012.

5. Main Estimates 2012/13 and corporate plans 2012/13–2016/17 of the Electoral Commission and LGBCE: formal evidence (in private)

The Committee considered this matter.

Oral evidence was taken in private from Peter Wardle, Chief Executive, Carolyn Hughes, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, and Alex Robertson, Director of Communications, the Electoral Commission; and from Max Caller CBE, Chair, and Alan Cogbill, Chief Executive of the LGBCE.

The representatives withdrew.

The Committee agreed that, subject to the Treasury's advice, it would be willing to consider the plans and estimates further by correspondence.

6. Any other business

The Committee noted an exchange of correspondence between the Electoral Commission and DCLG (dated 16 and 18 January), on the superannuation of payments to Counting Officers.

The Committee adjourned at 4.42 pm to a date and time to be set by the Chair.

SCEC FM 02 (2012)

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 27 MARCH 2012 AT 4.00 pm
SPEAKER'S STUDY**

Present:

Rt Hon John Bercow, Speaker (<i>ex officio</i>), in the Chair	
Sam Gyimah MP	Gary Streeter MP
Rt. Hon. Sir Gerald Kaufman MP	

Apologies: Rt Hon. Nick Clegg MP (*ex officio*), Naomi Long MP, Bridget Phillipson MP [maternity leave], Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP.

1. Consideration of minutes of the meeting on 7 March 2012

The formal and informal minutes of the meeting on 7 March were agreed.

2. Appointment of Commissioners: Rt. Hon. George Reid

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee agreed to recommend the re-appointment of Mr Reid, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation with qualifying party leaders.

3. Appointment of Commissioners: Wales

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee agreed a proposal for the wording of the Electoral Commission's advertisement for the post of Commissioner with responsibility for Wales.

The Committee agreed that the Commission should be asked to arrange the most effective dual-language advertising campaign possible, within a maximum budget of £7,600.

The Committee agreed the appointment of Dr Sara Wheeler as an independent public appointments assessor for the recruitment of the Commissioner for Wales, at the standard OCPA rate of £250 per day.

4. Chair of the Electoral Commission

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee agreed that an appraisal of Jenny Watson's performance as Chair of the Electoral Commission should be conducted, in accordance with OCPA guidance, by a sub-committee of the Speaker's Committee.

The sub-committee would be chaired by Gary Streeter MP.

5. Main Estimates 2012/13 and corporate plans 2012/13–2016/17 of the Electoral Commission and LGBCE: formal evidence (in private)

The Committee considered a letter from HM Treasury, dated 27 March 2012, providing its formal response to the Electoral Commission's corporate plan and estimate.

The Committee agreed to seek the Electoral Commission's response to the letter in writing.

The Committee adjourned at 5.10 pm to a date and time to be set by the Chair.

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 19 JUNE AT 10.30 am
SPEAKER'S STUDY**

Present:

Rt Hon John Bercow, Speaker (<i>ex officio</i>), in the Chair	
Rt. Hon. Sir Gerald Kaufman MP	Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP
Naomi Long MP	Gary Streeter MP

Apologies: Rt Hon. Nick Clegg MP (*ex officio*), Sam Gyimah MP, Bridget Phillipson MP.

1. Consideration of minutes of the meeting on 27 March 2012

The formal and informal minutes of the meeting on 27 March were agreed.

It was noted that the plans and estimates of the Electoral Commission and LGBCE had been agreed on 24 April, by correspondence, by Sir Gerald Kaufman, Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps and Gary Streeter.

The Third Report 2012 had been agreed on 28 May, by correspondence, by Naomi Long, Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps and Gary Streeter.

2. Sub-committee: report

The Committee considered a report from the sub-committee appointed to conduct an appraisal of Jenny Watson's effectiveness as chair of the Electoral Commission.

Gary Streeter moved that, having considered the report of the sub-committee, the Committee recommend Jenny Watson's re-appointment as Chair of the Electoral Commission.

Ayes

Rt .Hon. Sir Gerald Kaufman MP

Naomi Long MP

Gary Streeter MP

Noes

Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP

The Committee agreed to recommend the re-appointment of Jenny Watson as Chair of the Commission.

3. NAO: proposal for a value for money study of the LGBCE 2012/13

The Committee agreed a proposal from the NAO that the value for money study of the LGBCE for 2012/13 should provide a review of costings.

The Committee adjourned at 10.55 am until Tuesday 17 July 2012.

SCEC FM 04 (2012)

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 17 JULY AT 10.00 am SPEAKER'S STUDY

Present:

Rt Hon John Bercow, Speaker (<i>ex officio</i>), in the Chair	
Sam Gyimah MP	Bridget Phillipson MP
Rt. Hon. Sir Gerald Kaufman MP	Gary Streeter MP

Apologies: Rt Hon. Nick Clegg MP (*ex officio*), Naomi Long MP, Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP.

1. Consideration of minutes of the meeting on 19 June 2012

The formal and informal minutes of the meeting on 19 June were agreed.

Publication of the formal minutes to be deferred until the Committee's decision relating to the Chair of the Electoral Commission had been reported to the House.

2. Appointment of an Electoral Commissioner with responsibility for Wales

The Committee authorised the use of recruitment consultants in respect of the competition for a Commissioner for Wales.

A further budget proposal, if required, would be drawn up by the Electoral Commission and considered by correspondence.

3. LGBCE: qualification of accounts 2011/12

The Committee considered the matter.

4. Any other business

There was no other business.

The Committee adjourned at 10.15 am until Tuesday 11 September 2012.

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 11 SEPTEMBER AT 10.30 am
SPEAKER'S STUDY**

Present:

Rt Hon John Bercow, Speaker (<i>ex officio</i>), in the Chair	
Rt. Hon. Sir Gerald Kaufman MP	Naomi Long MP

Apologies: Rt Hon. Nick Clegg MP (*ex officio*), Sam Gyimah MP, Bridget Phillipson MP, Gary Streeter MP.

The Speaker noted that Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps, having ceased to be the Minister for Local Government, was no longer a member of the Committee.

1. Consideration of minutes of the meeting on 17 July 2012

The formal and informal minutes of the meeting on 17 July were agreed.

A detailed proposal by the Electoral Commission for executive search services to support the recruitment of a Commissioner for Wales had been considered by correspondence.

The responses were:

In favour: Naomi Long

Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

Against: Rt. Hon. Sir Gerald Kaufman

The proposal had been agreed to.

2. Consideration of draft Fourth Report, *Re-appointment of the Chairman of the Electoral Commission*

The Committee considered the draft Fourth Report, *Re-appointment of the Chairman of the Electoral Commission*.

The Committee agreed the text of the Fourth Report.

The Committee agreed to defer formal consideration of the appendices to the Fourth Report, for agreement by correspondence on Wednesday 12 September.

[[The appendices to the Fourth Report were subsequently agreed for publication, by correspondence, by Rt. Hon. Gerald Kaufman MP, Naomi Long MP and Gary Streeter MP.]

3. Letter from the Electoral Commission dated 27 July 2012 (Police and Crime Commissioner Elections – resource plans)

The Committee considered the letter together with the following correspondence:

- a letter dated 7 September 2012 from the Electoral Commission regarding its performance during 2011-12 (SCEC 19) and
- a further letter dated 7 September 2012 regarding the Electoral Commission's Core and Event-related expenditure (SCEC 20).

The Committee agreed that it was satisfied with the Electoral Commission's explanation, in document SCEC 19, of the reasons for the technical breach of a supply limit in 2011/12.

The Committee agreed to seek further information from the Electoral Commission in writing relating to the allocation of resources within the budget for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

4. Letter from the Comptroller & Auditor General dated 30 August 2012 (Electoral Commission Value for Money Study 2012/13)

The Committee agreed that it was content with the Comptroller & Auditor General's proposal for the 2012 Value for Money Study of the Electoral Commission.

5. Any other business

There was no other business.

The Committee adjourned at 11.05 am. The date and time of the next meeting to be advised.

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FORMAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 4 DECEMBER AT 3.00 PM
SPEAKER'S STUDY**

Present:

Rt Hon John Bercow, Speaker (<i>ex officio</i>), in the Chair	
Rt. Hon. Sir Gerald Kaufman MP	Naomi Long MP
Mrs Eleanor Laing MP	

Apologies: Rt Hon. Nick Clegg MP (*ex officio*), Bridget Phillipson MP, Gary Streeter MP.

The Speaker welcomed Mrs Laing, who had been appointed to the Committee on 12 November following the resignation of Sam Gyimah MP.

1. Consideration of minutes of the meeting on 11 September 2012

The formal and informal minutes of the meeting on 11 September were agreed.

The Committee agreed to annex to the minutes of the meeting correspondence received from Alasdair McDonnell MP (SDLP), Gareth Thomas MP (Co-operative party) and Leanne Wood AM (Plaid Cymru) in response to the statutory consultation on the proposal to re-appoint Jenny Watson as Chair of the Electoral Commission.

2. Recruitment of an Electoral Commissioner with responsibility for Wales

The Committee considered the recommendation of the independent panel chaired by Dame Denise Platt, relating to the recruitment of an Electoral Commissioner with responsibility for Wales.

The Committee agreed to endorse the panel's recommendation that Gareth Halliwell be proposed for appointment, subject to the outcome of statutory consultation.

3. Governance of the Electoral Commission and the LGBCE

The Committee considered correspondence from the Electoral Commission dated 28 November 2012.

4. Electoral Commission – public awareness resource plans

The Committee considered correspondence from the Electoral Commission dated 14 September. The Committee agreed that further information should be sought from the Electoral Commission.

Peter Wardle, Chair, Carolyn Hughes, Director of Finance and Alex Robertson, Director of Communications, the Electoral Commission, were invited to join the meeting.

The Committee discussed the matter. The Commission representatives withdrew.

5. Any other business

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 3.36pm.

The date and time of the next meeting to be advised.