

POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTIONS AND
REFERENDUMS ACT 2000



**THE SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE
ON THE ELECTORAL
COMMISSION**

FOURTH REPORT 2013

Re-appointment of an Electoral Commissioner

*Presented to the House of Commons in pursuance of
paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 2 of the 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.

Current membership

Rt Hon John Bercow MP, *Speaker of the House of Commons* (Chairman)
Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, *Lord President of the Council*
Mr Graham Allen MP, *Chairman of the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee*
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Previous Reports

First Report 2009 was published in April 2009 as HC 385 of Session 2008–09
Second Report 2009 was published in December 2009 as HC 137 of Session 2009–10
Third Report 2009 was published in January 2010 as HC 205 of Session 2009–10
First Report 2010 was published in July 2010 as HC 320 of Session 2010–11
Second Report 2010 was published in January 2011 as HC 724 of Session 2010–11
First Report 2011 was published in March 2011 as HC 916 of Session 2010–11
Second Report 2011 was published in September 2011 as HC 1478 of Session 2010–12
Third Report 2011 was published in October 2011 as HC 1509 of Session 2010–12
Fourth Report 2011 was published in December 2011 as HC 1701 of Session 2010–12
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Speaker's Committee Fourth Report 2013

1 Introduction

1. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, as amended by the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009, provides for the Electoral Commission to have nine or ten Commissioners.¹ 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

2. The current term of office of Tony Hobman, an 'ordinary' Commissioner, expires on 31 December 2013.

3. The Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission is required by s3 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, as amended by the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009, to oversee the procedure for selecting candidates for appointment to the Electoral Commission. Under s3(5A) of the Act, this duty encompasses the recommendation of candidates for re-appointment to the Electoral Commission.³ There is, however, no presumption in the statute either for or against re-appointment.

Tony Hobman

4. Tony Hobman has served as an Electoral Commissioner since 19 January 2010. At its meeting on 24 April, the Committee considered a written request from the Chair of the Electoral Commission seeking Mr Hobman's re-appointment for a second term, from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2017.

5. In considering the question the Committee had regard to the report on Mr Hobman's effectiveness submitted by the Chair of the Electoral Commission. Jenny Watson wrote to the Committee that Mr Hobman had consistently achieved the objectives agreed with him since his appointment in 2010 and was a valuable contributor to the Commission board. In particular, Ms Watson indicated that Mr Hobman's extensive experience in the private sector of improving performance and driving cultural, strategic and organisational change at a high level had proved very valuable: as chair of the Commission's Human Resources and Remuneration Committee he had overseen a review of the Commission's organisation and culture which had helped to embed better programme and project management and cross-team working within the Commission.

¹ s1(3) of the 2000 Act as amended by s6 of the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009

² A qualifying party is a party with two or more Members of the House of Commons at the time of the person's appointment

³ s3 of the 2000 Act, as amended by the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009

6. Ms Watson requested Mr Hobman's re-appointment in the expectation that his experience of the implementation of large scale change in both the private and public sector would continue to be valuable to the Commission during the events of the next few years: these events will include the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration, the referendum in Scotland and the UK Parliamentary general election in 2015.

7. Having considered Ms Watson's report the Committee concluded that it was content to recommend Mr Hobman for re-appointment.

Statutory consultation

8. 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. The Speaker accordingly wrote to the leaders of the qualifying parties on 2 May 2013, providing an opportunity for comment by 3 June. Those leaders who responded were content with the proposal. The responses received are reproduced in the appendix.

9. Appointments to the Electoral Commission are made by Her Majesty on an Address from the House of Commons.⁴ The Committee commends the re-appointment of Tony Hobman to the House.

⁴ s3(1) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

Appendix: Responses to statutory consultation with the party leaders

a) From Peter Murrell, Chief Executive of the Scottish National Party

Alex Salmond asked me to acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter of 2 May 2013, and to convey to you that he is content with the re-appointment of Tony Hobman to the Electoral Commission.

9 May 2013

b) From Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP, leader of the Conservative Party

Thank you for your letter of 2 May, regarding the re-appointment of Tony Hobman as an Electoral Commissioner.

In particular I welcome the detail in your letter setting out the conclusions from Mr Hobman's performance appraisal.

In light of this, I am content for a motion to be made in the House of Commons to the effect that an Address be presented to Her Majesty The Queen seeking the re-appointment of Tony Hobman to the Electoral Commission for a standard four year term.

20 May 2013

c) From Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg MP, leader of the Liberal Democrats

Thank you for your letter of 2 May consulting me as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Party on the proposed re-appointment of Tony Hobman as an Electoral Commissioner for a four-year term.

I am content on the basis of Ms Watson's evaluation of Mr Hobman's performance to support the proposed motion that he be reappointed to the Electoral Commission.

22 May 2013

d) From Rt. Hon. Peter D Robinson MLA, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party

Further to your letter of 2 May 2013 regarding the proposed reappointment of Mr Tony Hobman to the Electoral Commission for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2017, I would like to thank you for the courtesy in following the consultation requirement of section 3(2)(b), PPERA, and contacting me in my role as leader of the Democratic Unionist Party.

In this particular instance I am only too glad to support the proposal of Mr Hobman's reappointment to, and membership of, the Electoral Commission, and to the submission of the respective motion before the House.

29 May 2013