

## Consultation - Review of the Electoral Commission

Sir, At its meeting held on 31 March 2006 the District Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committee considered the above consultation document. They have asked that I submit to you the following response:

As a general view it is considered to be quite correct that there is an Independent Regulator for Elections and Political Party Registration and Donation so as to ensure a visibly open and transparent system in operation in the UK.

Part of the Commission's role is to give assistance on the conduct Of elections. It also provides a variety of support materials e.g. Candidates Guidance Notes which are well written and comprehensive. This helps to ensure a standard approach across the country and ensures that all candidates have access to all the relevant information. In short, it ensures consistency. To date this aspect has confined itself to annual elections only. This could usefully be extended to include all vacancies (casual vacancies) that arise as they are governed by the same rules and standards, rather than advise the circulation of either one's own documentation or the guide that was produced for the last set of major elections supplemented by further notes setting out the correct election timetable.

Although at major combined elections limited support is offered for Parish/community elections it is understood that these elections do not fall within the remit of the Commission. It is difficult to see how overall consistency can be achieved at local level when one type of election is left unsupported by the Commission while nation-wide all other elections are heading towards a consistent standard. The mandate of the Commission could usefully be extended and funded to include the same level of support for parish/community elections in the UK, including casual vacancies. This would contribute to the aim of providing and maintaining appropriate standards in this type of election, consistent with principal area elections support.

I trust that the above response meets your criteria. It is confined to the area of direct experience of the Commission. Should further information be required please let me know.

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