

Manager, Planning and Performance: job description

Introduction

The Electoral Commission was set up in 2000 to oversee the fair and transparent conduct of the electoral process in the UK. There are around 170 staff, based across the UK with offices in London, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast (although we are currently working entirely remotely during the coronavirus pandemic).

Our vision is to be a world-class public sector organisation – innovative, delivering great value and getting right what matters most to voters and legislators.

Planning and performance are fundamental in leading the Commission to identify and organise its response to ‘what matters most to voters and legislators’ and evidencing our achievements. The Commission has a statutory duty to do this; and would not be able to secure its funding otherwise.

Corporate planning

The Commission is required by the UK Parliament to submit a new five year corporate plan following a UK parliamentary general election, within the financial year. In March 2020, we submitted an interim corporate plan to the Speaker’s Committee on the Electoral Commission, interim by agreement with the Speaker given the unscheduled nature of the December 2019 election and limited time available to prepare it to schedule.

We have been developing a full five year corporate plan, which will require further Board input over the coming months ahead of its finalisation. We will take it to Speaker’s Committee during the winter, but it will be required beforehand, in the autumn, to enable us to meet our new direct accountability requirements to the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Parliament (also known as the Senedd).

In all other financial years we are required to submit a one year business plan and main estimate for approval. We have submitted our Business Plan for 2021/22.

Engaging with new devolved governments

It is only relatively recently (2016 for Scotland and 2017 for Wales) that key responsibilities for electoral matters were devolved to the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd. Governments in the devolved nations have demonstrated clear appetites for reform, such as for example the recent extensions to the franchise in both countries.

Scrutiny of our plans and performance is likely to increase now that our funding comes from three legislators. Leading our corporate, business and operational planning and performance is therefore now a more complex task than before, with all the different legislators requiring details on what the Commission delivers for them for the funds they provide.

What we are looking for

The Commission is 20 years old this year. The arrival of a new Chair of the Commission, the need to build new ways of working post-Covid and devolved accountability to the Scottish and Welsh parliaments all create an environment where we are looking to evolve our approach significantly across all aspects of planning and performance.

As the Manager your role will be influential in defining change and leading the organisation through the necessary steps. You will need to command the confidence both of senior management and of staff. You will bring a clear vision of the kind of approach we could aspire to have to planning and performance; you will be able to develop a strategy, deliver the practical steps to make that a reality and gain the commitment of the organisation to your approach.

You will also help us ensure that all the fundamental policies and procedures are in place, updated and embedded into the way we work. You will support producing directorate operational plans and key performance indicators, and ensure that measurement of our impact – known as benefits realisation – are fully reflected in our work. As such you will need a good grasp of the statutory requirements we need to meet. In addition knowledge of, or interest in the work of the Commission would be an advantage in contributing to our impact. You will also recognise the need to reflect differing approaches to planning and performance in different parts of the UK. You will help us embed these different approaches in our procedures as part of our approach to quality assurance.

An important part of your work will be to work with and develop the groups we have in place to support our ambitions. You will work directly with the Chief Executive and Executive Team to develop the corporate and business plans, and performance reports. You will also work directly with the corporate planning delivery group, Senior Leadership Team and Corporate Project Management Office, to develop this work and ensure that the Executive Team and Commission Board have access to expert advice.

The ability for problem solving is a key requirement for the role, with competing drivers and the need for plans which can respond to complex problems across the

three legislators. Problem solving has to take into account and deal with the conflicting views of stakeholders about what should be in plans, performance indicators, risk registers or audit plans, reflecting that there are different owners across the organisation for all these elements.

Different opinions occur on a frequent basis, intensifying at key points in the planning year. Each instance can be unique in that it is specific to an area of work, team, legislature and point in time, and so there is unlikely to be a precedent that can be relied upon. The post holder is required to facilitate a solution, bringing to bear their expertise in terms of ensuring that what is agreed meets the test of being robust and measurable and can withstand external scrutiny. Implicit in this is that the post holder has final say over what is acceptable and what isn't, and when matters need to be escalated to the Executive Team or even to the Commission Board, with the post holder setting out options and recommendations. Such matters have to be resolved quickly, for example in order to meet monthly and quarterly reporting deadlines. In terms of risk, there is a high level of scrutiny from the Commission Board, Speaker's Committee and the devolved legislators in Scotland and Wales. The Commission's credibility is at stake and therefore ultimately our funding.

More generally you will raise awareness of strategic and operational planning, performance, project and programme management, risk management and audit and assurance at the Commission. You will be responsible for identifying training needs, working with our Human Resources team to source and where appropriate deliver training at all levels. You will work closely with colleagues from Internal and External Communications teams to shape and deliver messages around the Commission's planning and performance.

You will find you have a good basis to build on. We currently have an interim in post who has been providing support to our teams and helping us develop our next corporate plan. Their key task has been to make sure that the foundations are in place for the post holder to make swift progress, and to ensure a seamless transition, both in managing the team and core activities.

Job Title: Planning and Performance Manager

Directorate: Finance and Corporate Services

Responsible to: Head of Strategic Planning and Performance

Responsible for: Senior Advisers and Advisers (Planning and performance, business intelligence, corporate project and programme management, risk and assurance)

Overall purpose of the post

This key role enables the Commission to demonstrate to its funders, the activities and outcomes it delivers, for the monies they provide. With funding now partly devolved from the UK parliament to the Scottish and Welsh parliaments, this endeavour is now more complex and will likely see increased levels of scrutiny from these stakeholders.

The key responsibilities of the post are the management, leadership and development of a multidisciplinary team that delivers:

- Strategic, corporate and operational planning
 - Performance management, business intelligence and benefits realisation
 - Corporate project management office, supporting project and programme management across the Commission
 - Corporate risk management, including corporate risk appetites
 - Internal audit programme of internal audits activities, and
 - Reporting Commission performance to staff, senior managers, Commission Board and the funding parliaments, including on plans, performance (including Human Resources and Finance), projects, risk and audit, through the corporate planning and performance system (Pentana)
-

Main responsibilities

Strategic corporate and operational planning

- Lead in promoting strategic planning and performance within the Commission, working with colleagues across the organisation
- Develop and deliver a strategy for planning and performance which have a measurable impact and commands confidence across the organisation
- Manage the Commission's strategic corporate planning activity (five-year plan) and business planning activity (annual plan), leading the activities that culminate in the production of the plan documents for the UK parliament's Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, Scottish and Welsh parliaments (the funders).
- Lead the annual business planning exercise, comprising identification and agreement of strategic business priorities, development of suitable tailored performance metrics, and to support the quantification of resource requirements. Liaise with the Head of Finance and Procurement and budget managers to ensure accurate and challenging targets are set for all areas, having regard to the needs of internal and external efficiency agendas and the overall funding agreed with the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission and Scottish and Welsh parliaments.
- Manage the new initiative business case process to agree Commission investment priorities and manage key interdependencies
- Monitor the operating environment identifying potential internal and external factors and challenges that will shape and inform Commission planning and priorities.

Performance management, business intelligence and benefits realisation

- Manage the development and maintenance of performance indicator profiles and benefits profiles with owners and senior managers, including definitions and target profiles.
- Monitor performance against approved plans providing clear, concise and timely analysis and business intelligence that supports and informs Executive Team, Senior Leadership Group and Commission Board understanding and decision making.
- Develop the use of benchmarking information across the Commission highlighting opportunities to champion ongoing improvement and best practice across the organisation.
- Lead continuous improvement activities on the work of the team, for example, reviewing the key performance indicators, reviewing the project and programme management process.

Project and programme management

- Develop, maintain and promote the programme and project management framework within the organisation. Operate a corporate project management office that ensures consistency with Commission standards for initial definition, approval, ongoing management and monthly reporting of organisational projects and programmes.
- Manage the corporate project management office, ensuring frameworks and mechanisms for efficient and effective matrix management and use of resources are in place
- Maintain and develop Commission project management standards and associated reporting.
- Manage the project support officers and the process to provide timely support to corporate projects and programmes.
- Maintain an effective lessons learnt log to support continued improvement in project and programme management.
- Participate in effective matrix management.

Management of risk

- Manage the Commission's arrangements for risk management, monitoring risk assessments and management actions across the organisation, ensuring reporting and appropriate escalation mechanisms are in place.
- Manage the Commission's process for approving risk appetites through the annual business planning process.

Audit

- Manage the internal audit contract and liaison with internal and external auditors on the internal audit programme, audit activities and audit log.
- Manage and maintain the Commission's log of audit recommendations.

Performance reporting – advice and support to internal customers

- Provide comprehensive and expert advice and guidance to the Board of Commissioners, the Executive Team and Senior Leadership Group and other staff on planning and performance, including development, service review and improvement
- Manage the provision of high quality performance and planning business intelligence and advice to a range of internal customers.

- Manage the support for directorates and project teams in meeting their planning and performance management responsibilities and in other performance management issues.
- Maintain an evidence based record of Commission performance and effectiveness that informs internal and external correspondence and decision making.
- Report Commission performance to staff, senior managers, Commission Board and the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments, including on plans, performance (including Human Resources and Finance), projects, risk and audit.
- Work with the Head of Finance and Procurement, complete the performance sections of the Annual Statement of Accounts.
- Manage and maintain the corporate planning and performance system (Pentana).
- Manage the provision of training and training materials to support the Commission to effectively manage, monitor, realise and report high quality planning, performance management, projects and programme management, risk management, audit and assurance services.

Strategic influence

- Play a leading role, along with the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance, in the development of an effective, supportive and integrated high quality planning and performance management, project and programme management, risk management, audit and assurance service to the Commission.
- Build effective relationships, particularly with senior managers and Commissioners, engaging them in strategic planning and performance, positively influencing the production of strategic plans and reports for the Speaker's Committee and Scottish and Welsh parliaments, which demonstrate good value for money, and secure the funding to deliver the corporate plan goals.
- Work closely with the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance, Head of Finance and Procurement, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, members of the Executive Team, members of the Senior Leadership Team, and Commissioners.
- Proactively support the communication and delivery of team responsibilities, embedding the Commission vision in the way services are delivered. Promote team activities and achievements.
- Organise and support external consultation as appropriate; promote the work of the Commission among planning and performance, project and programme, risk, audit and assurance groups and forums externally.

Organisational value for money – efficiency, effectiveness and economy

- As a subject matter expert, manage the team's role as a centre of excellence, advise and support colleagues across the Commission whom contribute to these activities and products.
- Develop and procure and/or deliver relevant training for the Commission.
- Promote and participate fully in a programme of ongoing organisational improvement that reflects the values and principles of the Commission, including the embedding of appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion standards.
- Support the implementation of agreed initiatives that enhance organisational effectiveness, provide support and guidance across the Commission, agree targets and monitor achievements.
- Ensure that the Commission's forward planning recognises and encompasses cost and operational efficiencies required in the corporate planning period.
- As a manager in the Finance and Corporate Services directorate, to champion, with others, the implementation of innovative technological and other change to Commission systems and processes that delivers cross cutting efficiencies across the organisation.

Staff management

Provide effective leadership and line management to the team by:

- Setting clear and measurable objectives, linked to delivery of organisational values.
- Identifying and agreeing ongoing learning and development requirements, and ensuring these are effectively addressed.
- Ensuring compliance with the Commission's performance appraisal scheme including regular and timely reporting.
- Providing advice and support as required and managing staff attendance.
- Sharing skills and information so that linkages across activities are visible and across the team (a) no single person is the only one with key skills, knowledge and experience (b) team members can provide support in planning, delivery and innovation and (c) there are opportunities for team members to develop skills and knowledge.

General

- Update and maintain our policies and procedures.

- Provide an overview of compliance with statutory obligations and ensure that all are met on time and to quality.
- Understand, and actively promote, the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan.
- Ensure equality of opportunity is maintained and respected at all times in accordance with the appropriate policies and procedures.
- Comply with the statutory provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Actively participate in opportunities to communicate within the organisation including attending team and directorate meetings.
- Make full use technology for all appropriate tasks.
- Demonstrate a willingness to work flexibly with others to respond to needs of an evolving organisation.
- Perform any other duty as directed by line management.

This job description reflects the present requirements of the post and should not be seen as an exhaustive list of responsibilities. Duties and responsibilities may develop and change in consultation with line management.

Person specification

Category	Requirement	Essential or Desirable
Qualifications and training	Educated to degree level or able to show equivalent experience and transferrable skills (for example resilience, good communication, effective leadership and management, planning and research skills, reporting writing and presentation skills, teamwork and interpersonal skills, and relevant work experience)	E
	PRINCE2 practitioner project management certificate or equivalent familiarity with project management principles, themes and processes	E
	Managing Successful Programmes practitioner certificate or equivalent familiarity with programme management principles, governance themes and transformational flow	E
	Benefits Management practitioner certificate or equivalent familiarity with benefits realisation principles, processes and approaches to identifying, quantifying, planning and realising benefits	E
	Management of Risk practitioner certificate or equivalent familiarity with risk management principles, approaches and processes	D
	Lean Six Sigma green belt practitioner certificate or equivalent familiarity with customer service and quality improvement principles, efficiency and productivity tools, and problem solving techniques	D
	Change Management practitioner certificate or equivalent familiarity with management of change principles, and tools and techniques to realise benefits and deliver results	D
	Management of Portfolios practitioner certificate or equivalent familiarity with portfolio management principles, including techniques and practices to deliver strategic return on investment	D
Planning and performance	Experience of managing corporate and operational / team planning	E
	Experience of managing performance management and reporting systems	E

	Experience of project or programme management	E
	Experience of benefit and performance indicator development	E
	Ability to plan, organise and deliver workloads to timetables and tight deadlines	E
	Experience of using the Pentana planning and performance system or equivalent	D
	Experience of assessing project or other risks, planning and implementing management responses	D
	Experience of audit activities or other quality assurance approaches and processes	D
Communication	Excellent oral and written communication skills	E
Problem solving	Strong analytical and logical problem-solving ability, with good decision making skills (judgement), to help solve potentially high profile performance problems at a corporate level	E
Business management	Understanding of the work of The Electoral Commission and the issues affecting it	D
Personal effectiveness	Able to cope with pressure, ambiguity and changing priorities	E
	Commitment to continuing personal and professional development	E
	High standards of professional conduct and a willingness to put the effort in to achieve continuing development of services	E
	Accurate with excellent attention to detail	E
	Innovative and creative abilities	D
Team working/ managing relationships	Experience of developing and maintaining effective working relationships with senior internal and external stakeholders	E
	Flexible (able to work flexibly to adapt to the needs of an evolving, independent, organisation)	E

	Are confident, persuasive, approachable and dependable to develop organisational plans and performance reports, which enable the Commission to demonstrate value for money to its funders	E
	Excellent presentation skills and ability to deliver training to staff	D
	Experience of working in support of senior managers to deliver planning objectives	D

Revised 16.03.2021
Head of Strategic Planning and Performance