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Dame Sue Bruce  
Commissioner  
The Electoral Commission  
City Chambers  
High Street  
Edinburgh  
EH1 1YJ

5 February 2020

Dear Sue

On 29 January, the Scottish Parliament passed a motion on Scotland's future:

That the Parliament recognises the sovereign right of the people of Scotland to determine the form of government best suited to their needs; agrees with the cross-party Smith Commission report published after the 2014 referendum and backed by the UK Government that "nothing in this report prevents Scotland becoming an independent country in the future should the people of Scotland so choose"; recognises that there has been a material change in circumstances since 2014 and that a referendum should be held so that the people of Scotland can decide whether they wish it to become an independent country, and calls on the UK Government to reach an agreement with the Scottish Government on such a referendum taking place on a date and in a manner determined by the Scottish Parliament, which the Scottish Government proposes should take place in 2020.

On Friday 31 January the Scottish Government informed the Scottish Parliament that it would ask the Electoral Commission for advice on the question which was used in the 2014 independence referendum - 'should Scotland be an independent country?'

I am, therefore, writing to you under the terms of section 10(1) of the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) on the same basis as in 2012 to request that the Electoral Commission provides advice and assistance to the Scottish Government by considering the wording and intelligibility of that question. I attach the question in ballot paper format.

I recognise and request that the Commission's advice will be set out in a report, published by the Commission, setting out its views as to the intelligibility of the referendum question, as soon as reasonably practicable and in such a manner as the Commission may determine. The report will be laid before the Scottish Parliament.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

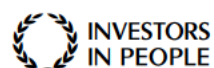
Pursuant to section 10(4)(a) of PPERA, the Scottish Government agrees to meet the charges for advice and assistance provided by the Commission in meeting this section 10(1) of the Act request.



**MICHAEL RUSSELL**

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The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)



Accredited  
Until 2020



# SAMPLE FORM OF BALLOT PAPER

BALLOT PAPER	[Official mark]
<b>Vote (X) ONLY ONCE</b>	
Should Scotland be an independent country?	
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

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