Written evidence submitted by Arron Banks

Letter from Arron Banks to the Chair of the Committee, 7 March 2018

Dear Mr Collins

Cambridge Analytica

I have been invited by the Select Committee to submit written evidence to the Committee regarding Cambridge Analytica's relationship with Leave.EU.

1. Scope of Relationship

1.1 Cambridge Analytica were asked, given their experience with political campaigning, by Leave.EU to tender for the provision of support to the leave campaign under the umbrella of Go Movement.

1.2 When Cambridge Analytica were asked to tender for a role in providing support to the campaign, they provided a proposal setting out in general terms how they could assist with analysing data relating to the campaign. They were also presented by Leave.EU/Go Movement as having the ability to provide campaign support during the lead up to designation, including at a press conference and in the designation application.

1.3 The Go Movement campaign did not win the designation to be lead leave campaigner and therefore those services were not provided. Cambridge Analytica's activity was limited to pitching how they could help the campaign if the designation was secured.

1.4 A copy of the designation application document submitted to the Electoral Commission has been provided. Cambridge Analytica were cited as a Strategic Partner in Section 05.33. As an aside, the Committee may wish to consider as to why Go Movement did not win designation and should take the time to compare the thoroughness of the Go Movement designation document, displaying the depth and breadth of the Umbrella's movement ability to lead the main designated campaign, compared to that of the winning Lead Campaigner's, Vote Leave, 13-page application.

1.5 The presentational pitch from Cambridge Analytica has been provided. Leave.EU also has email correspondence where Cambridge Analytica chase up their presentational pitch as they were keen to provide services to Leave.EU and its associated groups.

2. Timeline

2.1 Leave.EU met with Cambridge Analytica as follows:

- 23 October 2015 - The initial meeting between me and Cambridge Analytica et al was on 23 October 2015 when Cambridge Analytica gave me their perspective on

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1 Not published.
how Cambridge Analytica could potentially assist with a number of interests including Leave.EU and UKIP.

- 18 November 2015 - Cambridge Analytica appeared at a press conference with Leave.EU. Cambridge Analytica was represented by Brittany Kaiser.
- 20 November 2015 - Cambridge Analytica went to Leave.EU's Bristol offices and pitched their services, primarily to Leave.EU's social media team.
- 8 January 2016 - Liz Bilney of Leave.EU met Cambridge Analytica in London, and Cambridge Analytica presented a project plan and associated costs if Go Movement/Leave.EU chose to retain their services. Liz Bilney subsequently confirmed to Julian Wheatland of Cambridge Analytica that Go Movement/Leave.EU did not wish to proceed.

3. Statements associated with Leave.EU

3.1 The Committee has referred to a number of media references to the connection between Leave.EU and Cambridge Analytica, which it would no doubt be helpful to explain.

3.2 In my book “Bad Boys of Brexit”, I referred to Cambridge Analytica as being “hired” in October 2015. This is consistent with my first meeting with Cambridge Analytica and the intention to work with them subsequently. I do not agree that this reference is in any way harmful to the reputation of Cambridge Analytica as has been suggested by members of the Committee during Alexander Nix' evidence. Cambridge Analytica was keen to work with Leave.EU as demonstrated by their tender, attendance at a press conference with Leave.EU, and their press releases.

3.3 Andy Wigmore tweeted in April 2017 that “You should use Cambridge Analytics - we did apparently can highly recommend them”. I understand Andy to be referring to the fact that Cambridge Analytica were presented as potential strategic partners if Go had won designation. The endorsement was probably based on the quality of their tender and their experience.

3.4 Andy Wigmore also tweeted that “Leave.EU campaign brings in US voter data and messaging firm Cambridge Analytica” in November 2015. Again, I believe that this statement referenced the fact that Cambridge Analytica were proposed as a strategic partner if designation was secured.

4. Statements by Cambridge Analytica

4.1 Alexander Nix stated in his letter to the Select Committee that "Cambridge Analytica had no involvement in the referendum, was not retained by any campaign, and did not provide any services (paid or unpaid) to any campaign." It is incorrect to say that they had no involvement as they were presented at a press conference and in Go Movement's designation application as a strategic partner for the Go Movement who would provide services if Go was successful in winning designation as lead campaigner. It is accurate to say that they were not retained by Leave.EU and did not provide any services to Leave.EU as we did not proceed with their proposal.

4.2 Alexander Nix was quoted on 10 February 2016 in Campaign magazine as saying, "Recently Cambridge Analytica has teamed up with Leave.EU ... to help them better understand and communicate with UK voters. We have already helped supercharge Leave.EU’s social media
This statement is only true to the extent that Cambridge Analytica tendered to provide services to Leave.EU and the Go Movement and were represented as a strategic partner in the event that Go Movement won designation. Cambridge Analytica did not "supercharge Leave.EU's social media campaign". Leave.EU devised and implemented its own social media strategy which was hugely successful. This was without any input from Cambridge Analytica.

4.3 Leave.EU's dealings with Cambridge Analytica were limited to tender discussions, negotiations regarding contract terms contingent upon winning designation, and Cambridge Analytica being presented as an intended strategic partner in the event that designation was secured by Go Movement.

I hope this letter is helpful to the Committee and I would be happy to answer any further questions members may have.

Yours sincerely

Arron Banks