

Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP
Speaker's Committee for the Electoral Commission
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

13 March 2023

Dear Mr Speaker,

Funding for voter ID public awareness 2023/24

As Elections Minister, Lee Rowley MP has submitted a proposal to the Speaker's Committee that the Commission's estimate for FY2023/24 be increased by £1.5 million of current 'event' funding, to enable additional public awareness activity relating to voter ID ahead of the polls on 4 May. I am writing to share our perspective on this proposal ahead of the meeting of the Committee on Wednesday 15 March.

The Commission is halfway through its planned voter ID campaign, which began on 9 January and runs through to polling day. To date, performance is strong – we have seen public awareness of the new requirement rise from 22% to 63% in this period. By way of comparison, public awareness of the need to register to vote sits at around 85%. We are, therefore, confident that we have a well-developed and effective strategy in place to achieve a level of public awareness that is ambitious but realistic by the date of the polls.

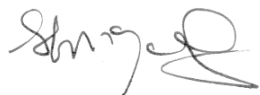
Nevertheless, we know that we face an uphill challenge. This is a new process that we need to inform people about, and a complex message for those who need to be advised about the free ID which is available. Many of those who are more likely to need the Voter Authority Certificate are in demographics which are harder to reach, and which face other barriers to engagement. And we have had less time to undertake this work than had been originally planned, owing to changes in the legislative timetable.

While pursuing for 100% awareness would never be realistic, and there will be a point where additional investment will reap diminishing returns, we are not at that point, and we are persuaded that the Minister's proposal represents a reasonable recommendation to the Committee to support us to even more effectively fulfil our duties. Within our planned campaign, there is scope for us to further extend our work through April and up to 4 May.

Should the Committee agree this proposal, we have a plan in place to deploy the funding in line with our existing, evidence-based, impartial strategy. This principally extends our use of TV advertising – both terrestrial and ‘on demand’ – as the most effective route to raise mass awareness amongst the broadest audience.

We will be happy to answer any questions you or the Committee have about this proposal and look forward to the discussions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Shaun McNally', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shaun McNally CBE
Chief Executive