



PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 3268 Email pacac@parliament.uk Website www.parliament.uk/pacac

Chloe Smith MP
Minister of State (Minister for the Constitution and Devolution)
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2AS

27th August 2021

Dear Chloe,

Elections Bill: Impact Assessment and Other Matters

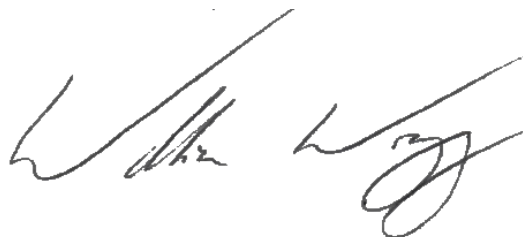
Ahead of your appearance before the Committee on 14 September to discuss the Elections Bill, the Committee has several questions which we feel would more usefully be dealt with via correspondence in advance, to allow for a more open and informed discussion during the evidence session itself:

1. An assumption has been made in the Impact Assessment that between 1-4% of the electorate will apply for a Voter ID card, even though a survey quoted in the Impact Assessment indicated that 31% of the electorate would apply. Can you explain why this assumption has been made given the survey results? What would be the effect of this higher take-up on the cost and administration of the policy?
2. A number of costs and benefits have not been monetised in the Impact Assessment. As such we are concerned that the likely the overall cost of the measures proposed by the Bill has been underestimated. Can you provide approximate estimates for the areas identified below, which have not been monetised in the assessment:
 - Voter ID:
 - ▶ Costs of creating a voter card application service;
 - ▶ Costs to individuals of obtaining the card, for example the travel time to collect; and
 - ▶ Costs to electoral administrators in implementing (enforcing) the policy.
 - Overseas voters:
 - ▶ Benefits through improvements to digital registration services.
 - Campaigning measures:
 - ▶ Costs to the Electoral Commission as regulator;
 - ▶ Costs to policing and criminal justice system; and
 - ▶ Expected number and magnitude of fines for breaches of the proposed new/amended legislation.

- EU citizens:
 - ▶ Cost of removing those no longer eligible from the register and communicating this to these people.
3. No assessment of the impact of the Bill on voter turnout and on fraud cases has been made in the Impact Assessment, despite the former being a major concern of many and the latter being an objective of the legislation. In addition, the pilot found that 0.4% of people asked for ID were turned away and did not return with the correct ID to vote. Will you provide an impact assessment of the effect on both voter turnout and fraud cases of the measures contained in the Bill?
 4. Why is the reduction of fraud cases not included as a measurable key performance indicator?
 5. Which costs included in the Impact Assessment will be met by local government and which will be met by central government?
 6. Do the additional staff costs of £10-30 million to implement the Voter ID card policy (for additional poll clerks and electoral admin staff) include the full cost of hiring, such as advertising the role, recruiting, National Insurance costs and any pension costs?
 7. Many of the costs and assumptions in the Impact Assessment are based on a pilot which took place in Woking, Surrey, a large commuter town in the Greater London Urban Area. As location (rural or urban) and demography (age, ethnicity, disability status, socio-economic status) may affect the take-up of Voter ID, how confident is the Government that the Woking pilot provides an accurate basis for scaling up to the whole UK? For example, is the assumption about posting versus collection appropriate given it has been extrapolated from a sample of voter ID cards issued in Woking?
 8. The Bill will restrict the number of proxy votes held per person to four. How many people currently hold proxy votes for more than four people?
 9. When will the Cabinet Office publish the monitoring and evaluation strategy for the policies implemented?
 10. As you will be aware, a JIT is required when a policy proposal could potentially have an impact on any aspect of the justice system. It appears to us that there is a strong possibility that aspects of this Bill could potentially increase or decrease the volume of cases going through the courts or tribunals, and change the way that cases are dealt with by the justice system. Can you explain why a JIT has not been produced for the Bill?

In light of your forthcoming appearance before the Committee, we would appreciate comprehensive responses to these questions and any relevant associated information or supporting documentation by Monday 6 September 2021. This letter and your response will be placed in the public domain.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Wragg', written in a cursive style.

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee

