



**Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities**

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE**  
*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and  
Communities**  
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Lynne Ridsdale  
Chief Executive of Bury Council  
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council  
Town Hall  
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Our reference: 26040352

*Dear Ms Ridsdale,*

*27th April 2023*

Thank you for your letter of the 22 March outlining the concerns of Bury Council regarding the implementation of the new voter identification requirement. I am replying as the Minister now responsible for this policy area.

The Government remains confident that this policy is deliverable for the May 2023 polls. The Government's focus is now on continuing to work with the sector to ensure that local authorities are properly resourced to deliver these important changes, including financial resource to enable them to communicate the changes to their electorates.

Our estimate of demand for Voter Authority Certificates is based on the latest Electoral Commission data, which found that 3.14% of those surveyed lacked any form of photographic identification. A further 1.14% lacked approved photographic identification where they were recognisable. Our modelling therefore presumes that 4.28% of the GB electorate will therefore need a free Voter Authority Certificate in the rollout year.

On 9 January, the Electoral Commission launched its wide-reaching, mixed channel public awareness campaign to ensure voters understand the change, and to support continued participation in the electoral process. The EC's website provides information for voters on what forms of identification are accepted in polling stations, and what identification checking processes voters should expect to experience in polling stations.

Alongside the Government and the Electoral Commission also sit local authorities, who are an equal partner in the important work of ensuring electors are familiar with, and prepared for, democratic events. Ever since the Electoral Administration Act 2006, local authorities have had a statutory responsibility to promote and encourage electoral registration and voting. The Government is aware of lots of innovative work being undertaken by local authorities to fulfil this responsibility and will be keen to understand which initiatives worked best for the upcoming local elections.

Each local authority was sent a Grant Determination Letter (GDL) in November 2022, the cover letter and annex to which set out the funding each local authority has been allocated

for the voter identification and accessibility changes. Local authorities received their initial upfront grant payment alongside the GDL.

As you will be aware, the Government has provided £4.75m of additional funding for local communications campaigns for local authorities with elections in May. The purpose of this funding is to help target harder to reach groups. Our funding model allocates £0.16 per elector.

We have been hearing from some Returning Officers, Chief Executives and Electoral Services Managers about resource pressures, and their concerns around the potential impact on polls. We recognise the unique challenge of implementing voter identification for the first time. That is why the Government will be providing an additional implementation grant for those local authorities with polls in May. This is a non-ringfenced grant paid alongside the wider New Burdens grant in April, which Returning Officers may use at their discretion. This equates to £700k for local authorities with polls this May, and a further £500k next year for those who will be doing voter identification for the first time in 2024, working out at £30/polling station.

We will continue to engage with the sector ahead of, and beyond, this year's elections to ensure successful delivery of the voter identification requirement is maintained.

Thank you for writing in on this important matter.

Yours ever,



**BARONESS SCOTT OF BYBROOK OBE**