

Jayne Bryant AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Tai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ref: PO/JB/508/2025

David Rees MS,
Chair
Llywydd's Committee
Senedd Cymru

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16 October 2025

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 30 September to myself and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, regarding the Electoral Commission's financial estimate of £3.609m for 2026-27 relating to its work on devolved Welsh elections. I am replying as the Minister responsible for elections and, copying this letter to the Minister for Finance and Welsh Language given his interest in expenditure from the Welsh Consolidated Fund.

I note that the Electoral Commission has projected increased funding from that required in 2025-26 to support the delivery of the 2026 Senedd and 2027 Local Government elections. I recognise that the Commission are operating in a context of generally rising costs across the board, and that there is uncertainty around the financial implications of the automatic voter registration, as noted in the annual estimate.

I also recognise and take assurance from the decreasing budget in subsequent years, following the two forthcoming significant devolved elections.

I also note the disparity between the estimate presented to the Committee: the projection in the Electoral Commission's five-year plan for Wales of £1.79m, and the projected figure of £3.9m set out in the UK Corporate Plan 2025-30 and discussed last year. I assume this is something the Committee would discuss with the Electoral Commission on 6 November, in advance of considering the Welsh Corporate plan next year. I look forward to the presentation of the Commission's firm intentions and accompanying financial requests in the Welsh Corporate Plan.

It is appreciated that a large proportion of the increase in this estimate from the current year is attributed to communications and policy work. This includes the second year of the registration campaign for the 2026 Senedd election and the first year of the campaign for the 2027 Local Government Elections. The estimate outlines additional funding for campaign advertising, voter education, resources aimed at under-represented groups, accessibility

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

enhancements, and the recruitment of temporary bilingual staff to support public information initiatives. All of these represent anticipated and constructive measures. I trust the Committee will share these objectives and will want to hear from the Commission how they will make the most efficient and impactful use of this funding.

The estimate also highlights notable staff and organisational expansion, including more than 50% growth by 2026–27, which will drive up core costs such as pay and National Insurance. Additional expenditure is also earmarked for improved accommodation and enhanced IT provisions, reflecting both organisational growth, inflation and the need for greater security. I assume the Committee will be ensuring that these increases represent value for money in terms of outcomes and efficiencies.

We are not aware of significant costs attributed to the Electoral Commission through the Members and Accountability Bill, and we assume that this work has not contributed to the estimate. The Committee may wish to satisfy itself on that point and note the Bill's timetable is set out incorrectly in the table. Introduction and passage are planned for the sixth Senedd (financial year 2025–26), with implementation in 2026–27, should the Senedd agree the Bill.

I can confirm the activities described by the Electoral Commission in the estimate for 2026–27 are in line with the Welsh Government's expectations. However, I note that costs relating to the implementation of Automatic Registration have not been included, which is counter to the current understanding that all realistic pay assumptions should be included in the estimate as considered by the Committee at its November meeting. However, I also acknowledge that a formal announcement cannot be made on the implementation of the pilots until the Commission's evaluation, expected in December, can be considered. The Committee may be required to consider a supplementary estimate at a later point. To ensure payments can be made promptly following Senedd consideration, it would be helpful if any supplementary estimate could be made available to the Committee in good time ahead of the Welsh Government's supplementary budget in 2026–27.

As ever, you have my assurance that, following the Committee's scrutiny of the Electoral Commission's proposals, my officials will work with the Electoral Commission to put in place a payment agreement to set out how the costs will be paid from the Welsh Consolidated Fund according to the budget agreed by the Senedd.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jayne Bryant MS
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Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government