



Eich cyf/Your ref CG/PO/383/2023
Ein cyf/Our ref qA1762325

15th November 2023

Dear John

Thank you for your letter of 3 November in relation to the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Bill. I have provided further information below in answer to your queries.

Electoral Registration without Application

The provisions requiring an open register sit within the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001. As this is secondary legislation, we will use secondary legislation to remove its application to the local government register in Wales. This will be done following Royal Assent of the Bill. To make this change Welsh Ministers will exercise powers under Section 53 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, these regulations will be subject to the affirmative procedure in the Senedd.

The impact of removing the open register for the local government register in Wales is likely to have a minimal impact on organisations that are not able to access the full register. A 2013 report by the House of Lords concluded that the open register served no public good and presented risks to privacy. It also concluded that the existence of the register can be a disincentive to registering to vote. Given that we will be automatically registering electors, removing access to information for some organisations felt necessary to build confidence in this new way of registering and to safeguard our citizens. For those eligible to register for the Parliamentary register, the open register will still exist. This means that we are largely protecting those young people aged 16 and 17 that will be on the local government register but are not eligible to be on the Parliamentary register. For those electors on the Parliamentary register, the choice will still be in place as to whether they wish to be on the open register or not.

Services to promote diversity in persons seeking elected office

It is important the barriers which prevent people standing for election and therefore taking a full role in democracy are identified and addressed. While we are clear that the socio-economic circumstances individuals find themselves in can impact on their options in life,

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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.

more research is needed as to the appropriate criteria to use to determine eligibility under section 28 of the Bill and what measures can be taken to support individuals.

We will therefore shortly be commissioning research in this area aimed at identifying steps which can be taken to encourage people with a range of different socio-economic backgrounds to consider standing for election. It is intended to identify where an individual's socio economic background has or could lead to inequality of outcome along with identifying the measures that could be put in place to support individuals during the election process.

It is also important we consider intersectionality and how protected characteristics can combine with certain socio-economic circumstances to present barriers to individuals' participation in democracy.

This is a complex area, which requires further exploration, and we will be seeking a wide range of views to shape both the eligibility criteria and the services which can be made available under section 28 of the Bill.

I look forward to attending the Local Government and Housing Committee again on 7 December to discuss the Bill further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mick Antoniw". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a short horizontal line.

Mick Antoniw AS/MS

Y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a Gweinidog y Cyfansoddiad
Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution