



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

Cllr Emily Smith  
Leader of the Council  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Milton  
Abingdon  
OX14 4SB

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11 March 2021

Dear Cllr Smith,

Thank you for your letter dated 11 January addressed to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, regarding the May 2021 elections. I am responding as the Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution at the Cabinet Office with responsibility for overseeing the upcoming elections.

The Government has confirmed that the set of local, mayoral, and police and crime commissioner polls will go ahead on 6 May in a COVID-secure way. As you have alluded to, holding elections is fundamental to our democracy and voters have the right to be heard and to decide who governs them. This is especially true in the context of the pandemic, where voters will be choosing the people who will be making decisions on vital local services.

The Government has made a firm commitment to support the delivery of these elections and has published a clear Delivery Plan which covers how the elections will proceed, from announcement to results. We have been working closely with the electoral community and with Public Health England since the polls were postponed in 2020 to ensure that we can deliver them in a COVID-secure way, and the Medical Officers advised Ministers in drawing up the Delivery Plan.

As outlined in the Delivery Plan, the Government is changing the nomination rules for candidates who wish to stand for election. Statutory instruments have been laid which will reduce the number of signatures that candidates are required to collect for almost all types of poll due to be held on 6 May, including council elections, mayoral elections and Police and Crime Commissioner elections. These provisions are intended to reduce the need for person to person contact in March ahead of the May election and are time limited; the elections next May (2022) will automatically revert to the standard rules. On the 19th February, the Government published a note on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) which made clear the exact numbers of signatures required for each type of election.

The Government recognises the excellent work that you and your colleagues are doing to deliver the elections this year in extremely challenging circumstances and we are grateful to you for your support and collaboration.

Thank you for taking the time to write about this important matter.

**Yours ever,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chloe". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

**Chloe Smith MP**  
**Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution**