

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 001442
Date 18 August 2017

Cost of Administering Elections

Request:

Can you please provide me with the estimated or actual amount of money spent by the local authority on the following items when administering i) the 2016 EU referendum and ii) the 2017 UK General Election?

1. Printing ballot papers
2. Distributing postal votes within the UK
3. Distributing postal votes abroad
4. Staff time for
 - a. manning polling stations
 - b. counting ballot papers
 - c. administering postal votes and proxy vote applications
 - d. processing received postal votes
5. Promotional material highlighting the date of the vote across the local authority
6. Pencils at polling stations
7. Polling booths
8. Ballot boxes
9. Tactile voting devices
10. Training staff (both counting staff and staff manning polling stations)
11. Signs directing voters to the polling station
12. Polling station signs
13. Hiring polling stations
14. Transporting ballot papers from polling stations to count centres
15. Storing completed ballot papers after the election
16. Provision of disabled access at polling stations

Following reasonable enquiries, it has been established that the Council does not hold the above requested information.

The Council does not spend money on delivering elections as this is done by a Returning Officer in their individual capacity. Returning Officers are not covered by the FOI legislation.

Consequently, we are unable to provide any information relating to the above, and are informing you as required by Section 1(1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("The Act"), that states:

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

To advise and assist you further under Section 16 of the FOIA, the government started to publish an overview of what individual Returning Officers had spent on the different aspects of delivering elections. This was done for the 2014 European elections towards the end of 2016 and we have been advised that it will be done for all subsequent elections over time. I would therefore expect the referendum information to be available in 2018 and the 2017 general election to be available in 2019.