From: FOI
Sent: 12 March 2018 11:32
To: [redacted]
Cc: FOI <FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: FOI 029/18 Aspire Details - Response

Dear Mr [redacted]

Our Ref: FOI 029/18

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **18 February 2018**, received by the Commission on **19 February 2018.**

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and has done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days.

Your request is in bold below followed by our response.

1. **Can you tell me will the accounts for Aspire the new political party registered by Lutfur Rahman also include spending on leaflets and other political activities by THING? According to the https://electionleaflets.org they have sent out a number of leaflets including this one https://electionleaflets.org/leaflets/15724/**

2. **Also can you tell me as a group for council purposes were they authorised to send out election literature?**

Our response is as follows:

We hold some of the information you have requested.

Question 1

The Commission assesses all applications to register political parties carefully against the requirements set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA).

The Commission received an application to register Aspire as a political party on 30 June 2017. After assessing the application to register Aspire, the Commission was satisfied the application met the statutory tests for registration. The Commission approved the party's registration on 26 January 2018.

For each registered party there must be a registered leader, nominating officer and treasurer, which are named in their application. It is inaccurate to state that Aspire was registered by Lutfur Rahman. Mr Rahman has never been proposed as one of Aspire's officers. The names of Aspire's officers are as follows:

- Leader: Kalam Mahmud Abu Taher Choudhury
- Nominating officer: Lilian Collins
- Treasurer: Jahed Bokth Choudhury

Further information about the party's registration may be viewed on our website here: http://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/English/Registrations/PP6713

As Aspire is now a registered political party, it is required to comply with the funding and spending rules set out in PPERA. This includes submitting an annual statement of accounts which must show the true financial position of the party and must include all income and expenditure for that year. The Commission publishes these accounts on its website as part of its commitment to ensuring transparency in party finance.

The end of the financial year for Aspire is 31 December each year. If the party's expenditure is £250,000 or less then it must report within 4 months of the end its financial year. If the party's expenditure is over £250,000 then it must report within six months and seven days of the end of its financial year, with an independent auditor's certificate.

Question 2

We do not hold the information you have requested.

Your request refers to a leaflet that was distributed in November 2017. We are aware of this material and understand that it was produced and distributed by the Tower Hamlets Independent Group (THIG) and not by Aspire.

The Electoral Commission is responsible for regulating the rules on political party funding and spending. We regulate the requirement for parties and other campaigners (but not candidates) to include an 'imprint' on campaign material that identifies the source of the material.

We are not responsible for authorising the distribution of electoral material. You may wish to raise this matter directly with your local authority.

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-I-make-an-foi-request

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: https://ico.org.uk/

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]
Information Management Adviser
The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
electoralcommission.org.uk
yourvotematters.co.uk

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