[redacted]

From: FOI
Sent: 24 May 2021 09:44
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 064-21 - Response

Dear [redacted],

Our Ref: FOI-064-21

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated 6 May 2021.

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

Your request is shown below followed by our response.

Any correspondence between the Electoral Commission and either a. Telford and Wrekin Council or b. West Mercia Police regarding a by-election in T&WC's Dawley and Aqueduct ward, sent or received between Monday, March 29 and Thursday, May 6 (the day of this request).

I would be grateful for an acknowledgment within 20 working days of receipt. If elements of the request cannot be fulfilled, I am happy to negotiate its exact terms and resubmit.

Following our request for clarification, on 11 May 2021 you provided the additional information set out below:

I am requesting information about reports and allegations of electoral offences or perceived impropriety, relating to the distribution of Easter Eggs including a leaflet with a picture that included the candidate.

You also confirmed that the date range given was for 2021, and not another year.

Our response is as follows:

We hold the information you have requested.

The Electoral Commission does not investigate allegations of electoral fraud. Allegations which may involve criminal offences are for the relevant police force and prosecuting authorities to investigate and prosecute. We do however publish data about cases of alleged electoral fraud that are reported to police forces across the UK every year, which we analyse to identify any trends or issues.

During each year, all police forces across the UK send us data about allegations of electoral fraud that they receive and investigate. We will be provide an update on all cases reported to us by the police during 2021 on our website in Spring 2022.

We received information from West Mercia police relating to the information you have requested as part of our regular monthly correspondence with all forces in the UK.

West Mercia contacted us on 30 April 2021 with a data that included a summary of an allegation relating to the offence of treating (RPA 1983) in Telford and Wrekin (Dawley and Aqueduct ward). Following investigation, the case was resolved locally by the police. Please see below for the information we have received from the police in our correspondence with them.

Local authority area: *Telford and Wrekin*

Electoral area: *Dawley and Aqueduct*

Election (type): *Local election*

Election date (relevant): *06/05/2021*

Date crime reported: *06/04/2021*

Summary title: *114 Treating*

Number of allegations: *1*

Allegation status: *Locally resolved*.

Comments/summary of the case: *"Complaint that a candidate in the forthcoming elections handed out Easter eggs to local primary schools w/i to corruptly influence the vote. Report to Police made after seeing images on social media. Candidate has advised that he is the Deputy Mayor and this is an annual event undertaken by the Town Council, however, as he is now standing for election he realises that he should not have participated. He says that other than dropping off the eggs he was not involved in distributing them and has made no reference to the election or voting. He has been given advice about the perception presented."*

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

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: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/freedom-information/make-a-freedom-information-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

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FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk

The Electoral Commission
electoralcommission.org.uk