From: FOI
Sent: 15 September 2021 16:52
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 106-21 - Response

Dear [redacted]

Our Ref: FOI-106-21

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated 02 July 2021.

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

Your request is shown below followed by our response.

Please could you send me copies of all emails sent and received by users at the Electoral Commission, from January 2019 to July 2021, which reference "Britain First", including copies of any attachments to those emails?

On 05 July you confirmed that you were looking for information about the registration of this party. On 23 July you clarified that your request related to emails which had been sent or received by Commission staff.

Our response is as follows:

Public authorities are not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit. This is outlined in section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). That limit is £450 for bodies that are not central government, Parliament, or the armed forces.

When estimating the cost of compliance, we may take into account the cost of the following activities:

- determining whether you hold the information
- finding the requested information, or records containing the information
- retrieving the information or records
- extracting the requested information from records

We have identified **746** emails which fall within the scope of your request some of which hold attachments. We estimate that on average it would take at least three minutes to process each piece of information, and based on the statutory cost of staff time would be £25 per hour. At three minutes to process each piece of information, and £25 per hour of staff time, we estimate that it would cost **£932.50** to comply with your request.

As this is above the cost threshold, we are refusing your request for information. This calculation is based on a search using your suggested narrowed search keywords, and the shortened time frame that you provided to us.

We have a duty under the FOIA to provide advice and assistance to those requesting information. In order for us to be more likely to be able to comply with the request, we suggest narrowing either the scope or the timeframe of your request.

For instance, your original request concerned emails sent by *all* Commission staff. We suggest that you could narrow the scope of the request to only include emails sent by members of the Registration Team (the team responsible for processing applications to register political parties) and/or members of the Commission's Internal Approvals Board (the internal body which deliberates over registration applications). You could also specify whether or not you would like to request external correspondence.

The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority, but in some circumstances we cannot release requested information, and we ask for your understanding in this regard.

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: 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,

Information Team
The Electoral Commission
electoralcommission.org.uk