[redacted]

From: FOI
Sent: 23 November 2021 10:33
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 134-21 - Response

Dear [redacted],

Our Ref: FOI-134-21

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated 5 November 2021 received by the Commission on 8 November 2021.

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 shown below followed by our response.

I would like to know how much the Conservative and Labour parties spent in the Hartlepool by-election on 6 May 2021.

I would also like to know how much the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties spent in the Chesham & Amersham by-election on 17 June 2021.

If my request is too broad, please get in touch and suggest how to refine it.

I would like this data in Excel format.

Our response is as follows:

We do not hold the information you have requested.

Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) there is a set time before certain elections when the rules on party spending and donations apply. We call this the 'regulated period'. The rules will differ, depending on which election is being held.

No regulated period applied in the case of the Hartlepool and Chesham & Amersham Parliamentary by-elections. Because of this, parties and campaigners were not required to report campaign expenditure in a return after the election.

Candidates and their agents were however required to submit a spending return, declaration and accompanying documents to the relevant Returning Officer at the local council following each by-election. The spending return lists what the candidate spent during the election campaign and also any donations they received.

Returning Officers are required by law to forward copies of candidates' returns to us following certain elections however they are not required to do so following a Parliamentary by-election. You will however be able to view copies of the relevant candidates' returns for both by-elections by contacting the respective Returning Officers at Hartlepool Borough Council and Buckinghamshire Council.

Returning Officers are required to make these returns available for public inspection without charge for two years after they receive them. At the end of the two-year period returns must be returned to candidates if a request is made by the candidate or their agent. Otherwise the returns, declaration and accompanying documents may be destroyed.

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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The Electoral Commission
electoralcommission.org.uk