[redacted]

From: FOI
Sent: 22 December 2022 15:17
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 094-22 - Response
Attachments: Reform UK financial scheme_redacted.pdf

Dear [redacted],

Our Ref: FOI-094-22

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated 12 December 2022.

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.

Please provide a copy of Reform UK's financial scheme and constitution.

Our response is as follows:

We hold the information you have requested.

We understand your request to be for the current constitution and financial scheme that we hold for the registered party Reform UK. Please find attached a copy of Reform UK's financial scheme.

Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) sets out that information that is already accessible to the requester is exempt from disclosure.

In regard to Reform UK's constitution, we released the document on 11 November 2021 in response to FOI 125-21, which is available here. This was and remains the current version of Reform UK's constitution that the Commission holds.

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

Information Officer
FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk

The Electoral Commission
electoralcommission.org.uk

Financial scheme

Reform UK

Introduction

1.1 This scheme sets out how Reform UK ('the party') will organise its financial affairs to comply with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 ('the Act').

Constitution

1.2 A copy of Reform UK's constitution, setting out our structure and organisation, and how we take decisions about the management of the party, is attached to this scheme or has been provided separately to the Electoral Commission.

Accounting units

1.3 Reform UK does not wish to register any separate accounting units with the Commission.

Organisations within the party

1.4 For the purpose of compliance with the Act, the financial affairs of any local branches or affiliated organisations of the party, whether currently existing or to be established in future, will be controlled centrally by the party treasurer.

Financial year

1.5 The party's financial year is 1 January to 31 December.

Role of the party treasurer

1.6 Mr Mehrtash A'zami, the registered treasurer of The Reform Party is responsible for the whole party's compliance with the requirements of the Act, including the following:

Annual accounts

1.7 The Reform Party will submit their annual statement of accounts to the Commission by the required date, being 30 April of the year following the end of the financial year if either their expenditure and income are under £250,000 in that year, or 7 July of the year following the end of their financial year if either their expenditure or income exceeds £250,000 in that year. We understand that if our income or expenditure exceeds £250,000 our accounts must be submitted with an independent auditor's certificate. In order to comply with this requirement, Mr Mehrtash A'zami has:

- put in place arrangements for ensuring that annual statements of accounts for the party are prepared, approved, audited where necessary and submitted to the Commission by the prescribed deadline for each register the party is on;

- put in place accounting processes capable of meeting the Act's accounting record keeping requirements and of any regulations made by the Commission about the format of statements of accounts.

Donations and Loans (regulated transactions)

1.8 Reform UK will report the donations and loans it receives each quarter to the Commission, for each of the registers it is registered on, within the following timescales:

- Quarter 1 (1 January – 31 March) by 30 April of that year
- Quarter 2 (1 April – 30 June) by 30 July of that year
- Quarter 3 (1 July – 30 September) by 30 October of that year
- Quarter 4 (1 October – 31 December) by 30 January of the following year

1.9 In order to comply with this requirement, Mr Mehrtash A'zami will ensure:

For donations:

- record information for all donations of more than £500, including:
  - amount or value of the donation
  - full name of donor
  - registered address of donor
  - company registration number (if applicable)
  - date on which the donation was received
  - date on which the donation was accepted or returned
  - information about the trust (if applicable)

- check the permissibility of any donations over £500 within 30 days of receipt
- ensure that impermissible or unidentifiable donations of more than £500 to the party are recorded as outlined above and returned to the sender or financial institution that transferred the money or, if that is not possible, surrendered to the Commission
- ensure that a submission of quarterly donation reports covering donations exceeding £7,500 (including aggregates of donations and regulated transactions) and any impermissible or anonymous donations of more than £500 is made to the Commission within the above timescales; submitting a nil return if there are no reportable donations[1]
- provide weekly donation reports to the Commission during UK Parliamentary election campaigns if we are contesting the election

1.10 We understand that if we submit four consecutive quarterly nil donation returns, we will then be exempt from submitting further quarterly returns in respect of donations until we receive a reportable donation.

1.11 We also understand that separate quarterly donation returns must be submitted if we appear on the Northern Ireland register of political parties.

For loans (regulated transactions):

- record information about all regulated transactions (loans, credit facilities, etc.) of more than £500, including:
  - value of benefit of the transaction
  - name of all authorised participants
  - registered addresses of participants
  - company registration number

  - nature of the transaction
  - date agreement entered
  - the terms of the transaction
- ensure that the party does not enter into any regulated transactions over £500 with unauthorised participants
- ensure that a submission of quarterly transaction reports covering transactions exceeding £7,500 (including aggregates of donations and regulated transactions) and any void transactions or transactions of more than £500 entered into with an unauthorised participant is made to the Commission within the prescribed timescales; submit a nil return if there are no reportable transactions
- ensure weekly regulated transaction reports can be submitted during UK Parliamentary election periods if we are contesting the election

1.12 We understand that if the party has submitted four consecutive quarterly nil loans returns, we will then be exempt from submitting further quarterly returns until we enter into a reportable loan.

1.13 We also understand that separate quarterly loan returns must be submitted if we appear on the Northern Ireland register of political parties.

Campaign expenditure

1.14 The party will submit a campaign expenditure return if we have candidates contesting a UK Parliamentary election, European election, Scottish Parliamentary election, National Assembly of Wales election, or Northern Ireland Assembly election. The campaign expenditure return will be submitted within three months of the date of the election if our expenditure is less than £250,000 or within six months of the date of the election if our expenditure exceeds £250,000. We note that if our expenditure during the campaign exceeds £250,000 our return must be submitted with an independent auditor's certificate.

1.15 In order to ensure compliance with the legislation, Mr Mehrtash A'zami will:

- ensure that campaign expenditure and claims payments are duly authorised, received and paid on time and that all relevant receipts and invoices are kept
- put in place budgeting and monitoring arrangements to ensure that campaign expenditure is within the statutory limits
- ensure the compilation, auditing (if necessary) and timely submission to the Commission of a campaign expenditure return within the statutory deadlines

Referendums

1.16 If the party participates in a referendum to which Part VII of the Act applies, The Reform Party will develop and put in place arrangements for complying with the controls on referendum expenditure. We will do this by adapting our arrangements for the control of campaign expenditure.

Grants

1.17 Reform UK will ensure that any grants from the Commission to the party are spent in accordance with the conditions of grant imposed by the Commission. We agree to cooperate with any associated audit requirements specified by the Commission.

Changes to registered details

1.18 Reform UK will ensure that the party's details that are registered with the Commission are kept up to date. We will inform the Commission of any changes to registered officers within 14 days of the change.

1.19 We will ensure that our RP8 annual confirmation of registered details and £25 fee are submitted to the Commission with the annual statement of accounts by 30 April of the following year (if our expenditure or income is less than £250,000) or by 7 July of the following year (if our expenditure or income exceeds £250,000).

1.20 We note that failure to submit our RP8 annual confirmation of registered details within the prescribed timescale will result in our statutory removal from the register of political parties. We understand that this would mean that the party would no longer be able to field candidates at elections under the party name.

Penalties and offences

1.21 Reform UK understands that the Commission may impose civil penalties on parties that fail to comply with their legal obligations, including failures to submit statutory returns on time. The party also understands that failure to comply with certain legal requirements of being a registered political party is a criminal offence.

Role of other party officers

1.22 Should the appointment of the registered party treasurer terminate for any reason, then the registered party leader will, until a new treasurer is appointed, be treated as the party treasurer and will be responsible for ensuring that the party complies with its legal obligations.

1.23 Should the treasurer whose appointment is terminated also be the party leader, then the nominating officer will, until a new treasurer is appointed, be treated as the party treasurer.

1.24 Should the treasurer whose appointment is terminated also be party leader and nominating officer, then the other registered officer will, until a new treasurer is appointed, be treated as the party treasurer.

Promoting compliance with the Act

1.25 Reform UK will have processes in place to ensure compliance with its legal obligations. The registered treasurer, Mr. Mehrtash A'zami, will ensure that the registered leader and all other officers and members of Reform UK have sufficient knowledge of our financial obligations under the Act to ensure that the party as a whole complies with these obligations.

Amendments to the financial scheme

1.26 The registered treasurer, Mr Mehrtash A'zami will ensure that any proposed amendments to this financial scheme are submitted to the Commission for approval.

Signed

Leader: _____ Date: _____

Nominating officer: _____ Date: _____

Campaigns officer (if applicable): _____ Date: _____

Other officer (if applicable): _____ Date: _____