

Request 9089 – Elections

See below.

Response

Thanks for your request made under the Freedom of Information Act. I am sure you know that electoral registration and elections are not the responsibility of the local authority, but of the independent Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer. These two independent positions are not subject to the FOI act in the way the council is. Notwithstanding that, I will try and provide as much information as I can.

How many staff did the council have in employment exclusively to work in the elections team at each of these elections?

1. General Election 2015 – 3 FTE and 1 FT temp
2. General Election 2017 – 2 FTE, 2 PTE (60% of FT) and 1 FT temp
3. General Election 2019 – 4 FTE and 1 FT temp
4. May 2021 elections – 4 FTE and 1 FT temp

I have taken this question to refer to the makeup of the core elections team, I hope this is correct.

What was the ES budget for the following years:

1. 2016 – data not easily available or comparable due to system change
2. 2017 - £232K
3. 2018 - £276K
4. 2019 - £342K
5. 2020 - £369K
6. 2021 - £394K

These are electoral registration staffing and recharge figures only. These figures have been rounded down to the nearest £000. They reflect the changes to the core team structure shown above and also changes to internal recharging. They do not

include any of the costs of elections, which are recharged externally with the exception of SCDC elections which last took place in 2018 (and will take place again next year).

Regarding the cost of General Elections – these costs are paid for by the government. No costs have been incurred by the local authority other than core team salary costs. I cannot yet confirm the cost of the 2021 elections as these are not yet finalised. The election is definitely more expensive than usual due to the complexities of the combination and the additional Covid measures needed.

How many Presiding Officers worked in each election in the council area (these are not split by constituency)

- GE 2015 – 120
- GE 2017 – 121
- GE 2019 – 122
- May 2021 – 123

How many Poll Clerks worked in each election in the council area (these are not split by constituency)

- GE 2015 – 187
- GE 2017 – 188
- GE 2019 – 188
- May 2021 – 248 (this number includes additional staff operating as Covid marshal clerks)

Training has been delivered in house for all these elections - no external suppliers have been engaged to run training sessions.

In accordance with retention requirements, I no longer hold ballot paper accounts for any election except May 2021, so I cannot provide accurate figures regarding tendered ballot papers. Anecdotally I can confirm very few have been issued in

South Cambridgeshire over this period. I believe one elector was issued tendered ballot papers in May 2021 due to an issue regarding their postal vote.

All properly nominated candidates have always appeared on ballot papers as appropriate.