Information Governance Team

Postal Address:
Coventry City Council
PO Box 7097
Coventry
CV6 9SL

www.coventry.gov.uk
E mail: infogov@coventry.gov.uk
Phone: 024 7697 5408

[redacted]

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Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
Request ID: FOI838826892

Thank you for your request for information relating to Local Elections Spending.

You have requested the following information:

1. How many languages do you currently translate into beyond English for election services and communications around elections, either local or devolved?
2. How many of these languages are regarded as domestic to the British Isles (i.e. Welsh, Irish, Scottish Gaelic etc)?
3. Which overseas languages do you translate into excluding languages indigenous to the United Kingdom?
4. In terms of translations, what is the spend or estimated spend on overseas languages linked to local or devolved election material, for the May 2026 local or devolved elections? This spending may have taken place across two financial years (2025/26 and 2026/27). I am looking for all translation expenditure tied to this electoral event regardless as to which financial year it took place.
5. Can you offer a segmented breakdown on the spend per overseas language for the same period/event?
6. Can you offer a segmented breakdown on how that money is spent for the same period/event? By way of example, polling station support, targeted outreach to specific communities, digital communications etc.
7. What do you understand your legal obligations to be in terms of translating election materials into overseas languages?

We refer to your request under the Freedom of Information Act regarding elections. We can confirm that Julie Newman Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer for Coventry City

Council under Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 is a separate to her appointment as Chief Legal Officer and, although appointed by the council, the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer's responsibilities and duties are personal. As such an Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer does not carry out the duties on behalf of the local authority but in their own personal capacity.

A list of public bodies and local authorities that are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act is included in Schedule 1 to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which can be viewed here:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/schedule/1

As you will see, the Freedom of Information Act does not list any person appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983. It follows that the Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer or any other person appointed under the Act are not subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

In the interests of transparency we am able to provide the following information:

Legal obligations for translation of election materials
Legislation provides for the nomination paper and ballot papers to be produced only in English (and Welsh in Wales) and not in any other language or format (Section 199B, RPA 1983; Article 86, Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015; Article 138, The Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) Order 2025).

The Returning Officer is able to where appropriate consider providing other documents to be displayed in alternative formats such as:

• in Braille
• in languages other than English (or Welsh in Wales)
• using graphical representations
• in audio format
• using any other means of making information accessible

Currently we do not routinely provide notices in other languages at polling stations due to the number of different languages spoken in Coventry. Our notices have a graphical representation where possible. We also do videos on social media which provide demonstrations on polling station voting, postal voting etc. We do also offer the provision of documents in other languages on request. We have been doing work with our local community groups to look at what we provide and will continue with that work and consider suggestions as appropriate.

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: FOI/EIR Disclosure Log, Publication Scheme, Facts about Coventry and Open Data that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email icocasework@ico.org.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance