



Cabinet Office

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R KING

By email request-483631-584f14a8@whatdotheyknow.com

FOI Reference: FOI326271
25/5/2018

Dear R KING

I refer to your request where you asked:

Dear Cabinet Office,

In the Voter ID pilot at the local elections in May 2018, in the case of elections in each of Bromley and Gosport would an electronic original utility bill have been accepted as an ID document or could a returning office refuse to issue a ballot when shown an original electronic document solely on the grounds that the document is in electronic format?

I can confirm that the Cabinet Office holds some recorded information in scope of your request for each local authority. This information is publicly available and we have provided links in our response below. This information is covered by section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act (the Act) which exempts the requested information from disclosure if it is reasonably accessible to the applicant. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and the Cabinet Office is not obliged to disclose the information to you.

1. London Borough of Bromley

Information is publicly available that is relevant to this part of your request. It is available at:

http://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/200033/elections_and_voting/1177/voter_id_pilot

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/685905/180110_London_Borough_of_Bromley_Identification_in_Polling_Stations_Pilot_Order_2018_FINAL_.doc.pdf

Outside the Act, I can tell you that, in Bromley, it would not have been acceptable to present an electronic form of ID. Non-electronic copies of accepted ID documents would have been acceptable, provided that the presiding officer in the polling station considered a copy appropriate. The forms of ID that were accepted were widely publicised, including on the Bromley Borough Council website link above. The Order (the second link above) governing the running of the pilot states:

(2A) A ballot paper must not be delivered to a voter unless that voter has produced a specified document to the presiding officer or a clerk.

(2B) Where a voter produces a specified document, the presiding officer or clerk to whom it is produced must deliver a ballot paper to the voter in accordance with paragraph (1) unless the officer or clerk decides that the document raises a reasonable doubt as to whether the voter is the elector or proxy he represents himself to be. [...] [Pages 3-4]

(8) In this rule, a reference to— [...] (b) a document— (i) is a reference to the document itself, or a copy of that document if the presiding officer considers a copy appropriate other than a copy in electronic form [...]; [Page 6]

2. Gosport Borough Council

Information is publicly available that is relevant to this part of your request. It is available at:

<https://www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/council-services/electoral-services/voter-id-pilot/>

www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/council-services/electoral-services/voter-id-pilot/ids/

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/685762/180110_Gosport_Borough_Council_Identification_in_Polling_Stations_Pilot_Order_2018_FINAL_.doc.pdf

Outside of the Act, I can tell you that, in Gosport, it would not have been acceptable to present an electronic form of ID. The forms of ID that were accepted were widely

publicised from January 2018 until polling day, including on the Gosport Borough Council website links above. The Order (the last link listed above) governing the running of the pilot states:

(2A) A ballot paper must not be delivered to a voter unless that voter has produced a specified document to the presiding officer or a clerk.

(2B) Where a voter produces a specified document, the presiding officer or clerk to whom it is produced must deliver a ballot paper to the voter in accordance with paragraph (1) unless the officer or clerk decides that the document raises a reasonable doubt as to whether the voter is the elector or proxy he represents himself to be. [Pages 3-4]

[...] (7) In this rule, a reference to— [...] (c) a document— (i) is a reference to the document itself and not a copy, whether in paper or electronic form; [Page 6]

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Sharon Carter
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

email: foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. B. Smith', written on a light blue background.

FOI Team
Cabinet Office