

**Question: CQ13.01**

**Cabinet – 22 June 2021**

**Re: Agenda item 13 - Electoral Services specialist printing tender**

**Question submitted by: Councillor Steve Pearce**

Analysis of the numbers of ballot papers issued, of block votes and split votes at the recent election indicates that many voters did not use all of their votes. The same thing has happened previously.

I am concerned that this may indicate that the electors are being failed by the official communications or messaging that they receive ahead of Polling Day and at the Polling Station. Some members of our communities appear to have been seriously and serially disadvantaged in their ability to participate in our democracy. This could be better recognised in the EqIA.

This contract only covers canvass materials, polling cards, ballot papers and absent voter materials.

My question tries to discover how much discretion is given over the content of print matter in this contract:

**Can the messaging on the materials in this contract be made more clear within the legislation and can those items not within the contract (such as other signage at Polling Stations) be made more comprehensive and useful to the voter so that there is greater clarity over what we can and cannot do in the polling booth? It varies from ward to ward!"**

**Answer:**

- **This contract is specific to the main election items and voter registration forms needed to be printed such ballot papers and postal voting packs. It does not include the items your question refers to.**
- **Signage in polling stations is not a part of this contract.**
- **The Retuning Officer provides "how to vote" wording in polling stations that are fully compliant with the legislation**
- **Training was provided to all polling station staff to ensure that a consistent message was said regarding how to vote and how to complete ballot papers.**
- **Extensive community engagement was undertaken to explain the various elections and the voting process. This included provided a toolkit of messages, key dates and posters.**
- **For the May 2021 elections every polling station had a detailed 2m high sign explaining both Covid safety information and how to vote information. This was in every station and ensured consistent information was available both inside and outside the voting booths.**