

Cabinet

28th February 2022

REVIEW OF ELECTION FEES PAYABLE AT THE COUNTY COUNCIL AND TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The purpose of this report is for Council to review and approve the fees payable to the Returning Officer in respect of these local elections.

Recommendations / key decisions required:

To approve the following:

1. That the fees payable to the Returning Officer which is inclusive of payments to those undertaking the role of Deputy Returning Officers and other key personnel involved in the planning and oversight of the County Council and Town / Community Councils be as follows:
 - a. £170.00 per contested election
 - b. £56.61 per uncontested election
2. To authorise the Chief Executive as the Council's Returning Officer to:
 - a. Make arrangements for the employment of persons to assist with the Local Elections
 - b. Determine the level of fees and payments to those employed on Election duties, subject to the total amount payable being within the available resources set to cover the cost of these elections
 - c. There will be full cost recovery for any costs incurred for Town/Community Council elections.

Reasons

To determine certain fees payable for the local elections.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted No

Cabinet Decision Required NO

Council Decision Required YES

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr David Jenkins

Directorate: Corporate
Services/Head of
Administration & Law/Assistant
Chief Executive People
Management

Name of Director:
Chris Moore

Linda Rees-Jones
Paul R Thomas

Designations:

Director of Corporate Services

Head of Administration and
Law

Assistant Chief Executive
People Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review of Election Fees payable at the County Council and Town/Community Council Elections

The fees payable to the Returning Officer in respect of these Elections and all associated costs relating to them are determined locally and are funded by the County Council and the Town / Community Councils. This includes payments to persons employed by the Returning Officer to undertake the following tasks:

- (i) The preparation, revision and issue of official poll cards;
- (ii) The issue and receipt of postal ballot papers;
- (iii) The verification of the ballot paper accounts;
- (iv) The count; and
- (v) Any other clerical or other assistance for the purposes of the election.

The duties of the RO are separate and one of a personal nature from his/her duties as a local government officer. The RO is not responsible to the local authority but directly accountable to the courts as an independent statutory office holder by virtue of the Representation of the People Act 1983

The County Council has made budgetary provision to cover the costs of holding the local elections on 5th May 2022 in the Revenue Budget Strategy 2022-2025 and there will be full cost recovery for the administration of the Town / Community Council elections.

Scheme for the calculation of the Returning Officer's fees and those undertaking the role of Deputy Returning Officers and other key personnel for the County Council and Town / Community Council Elections:

The following sets out the current rates applied in 2017 (adjusted for estimated pay awards to 2022, together with the proposed scheme for calculating the fee payable to the Returning Officer which is inclusive of payments to those undertaking the role of Deputy Returning Officers and other key personnel involved in the planning and oversight of Local Elections:

| | Current Fees | Proposed Fee |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| County Council Elections | | |
| Contested Ward | £170.56 | £170.00 |
| Uncontested Ward | £66.60 | £56.61 |
| Postal Votes – fee for despatch and receipt (per contest) | £53.97 | Nil |
| Town/Community Council Elections | | |
| Town/Community Council Elections – fixed Fee | £6,297.30 | Nil |
| Local elections - Contested Ward | - | £170.00 |
| Local elections - Uncontested Ward | - | £56.61 |
| By-election - Contested Ward | £170.56 | £170.00 |
| By-election - Uncontested Ward | £66.60 | £56.61 |
| Postal Votes – fee for despatch and receipt (per contest) | £53.97 | Nil |
| Fee for general round of Local Elections | | |
| Training Fee | £2,024.00 | Nil |

The proposed structure of a pre-set fee for each and every contested and uncontested electoral division/community ward at both county and town and community level follows the benchmarking of the rates, with the fee for non-contested elections being set at 1/3rd of the contested election rate.

Fees are not proposed for any other activity undertaken as part of the role, such as training, receiving candidate nominations, oversight of postal vote and poll card despatch, and overseeing the count and declaring results.

If it is assumed that the 2022 elections have the same ratio of contested/uncontested elections, then it would result in a reduction of 43% on the fee payable for the County Election.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ? | NO |
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IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services

| | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities NO | Legal YES | Finance YES | ICT NO | Risk Management Issues YES | Staffing Implications YES | Physical Assets NO |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|

2. Legal

- Representation of the People Act 1983;
- Representation of the People Act, the Representation of the People Regulations, the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006;
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

3.Finance

Within the existing budget set aside in the 2022/2025 revenue budget strategy and the Earmarked reserves for the costs of holding the local elections in 2022

5. Risk Management Issues

Failure to meet the statutory requirements of the legislative requirement of local government elections.

7. Staffing Implications

Failure to recruit sufficient staff for the elections will result in our inability to meet the legislative requirement of local government elections.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Chris Moore

Director of Corporate Services

1. Scrutiny Committee

N/A

2. Local Member(s)

N/A

3. Community / Town Council

None

4. Relevant Partners

None

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

None

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

| Title of Document | File Ref No. | Locations that the papers are available for public inspection |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| | | www.carmarthensire.gov.uk |