

COUNCIL

DATE: 28 MARCH 2019

TITLE OF REPORT: FEES AND EXPENSES FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS

Report of: RETURNING OFFICER

Cabinet Member: Leader

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval to the scale of the fees and reimbursement payable to the Returning Officer to the administration and running of local elections.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council agrees that:

- A. The Hampshire & Isle of Wight scale of election fees shown in Appendix I be approved; and
- B. The Section 151 Officer is delegated authority to approve future local election fee recommendations from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Election Fees Working Party.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In accordance with the Representation of the People's Act 1983 the cost of local elections are met from the local authority's budgets.
- 3.2 The local authority is required to appoint a Returning Officer to conduct these elections on their behalf and the Returning Officer is personally (not corporately) responsible for the management of elections. The Returning Officer is directly accountable to the Courts system as an independent Statutory Officer. The duties of the Returning Officer are separate from the duties as a Local Government Officer.
- 3.3 Each local authority is required to place the services of its staff at the disposal of the Returning Officer to help run the election.

4 COMMENTARY

4.1 In order to run a local election, experience shows that in Hart, the Returning Officer needs to employ and pay up to 350 additional staff with different levels of responsibility. It is important that this is done fairly and transparently. In order to achieve this, the Returning Officers across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight review and agree a schedule of fees which they all use and share with their own local authority. This ensures that there is a consistent approach for everyone.

- 4.2 The proposed Hampshire & Isle of Wight fees for 2019/2010 are attached at Appendix I.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The potential fees for administering local elections are already built into the Council's annual budget. Fees for Neighbourhood Plan referendums can be reclaimed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Grant application to be made by the Council upon adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan following a successful referendum. Fees for Parliamentary and European Elections, and for national referendums are set by the Government on each occasion.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I - Local Government Act 1972, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Scale of Costs, Charges and Expenses at Elections of County Councillors, District Councillors and Parish Councillors (2019/2020).