

Council

Election Fees Schedule 2011/12

8 December 2010

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree the election fees for 2011/12

This report is public

Recommendations

Council is recommended:

- (1) To agree the election fees policy and election fees schedule for 2011/12 as set out at appendix 1 and 2 to the attached report.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the budget process for 2010/11 Council agreed an updated fees schedule for elections. The previous fees schedule had been last revised in 2006 and at the time it was agreed that it would be prudent to review election fees annually. Additionally it was noted that the Returning Officer had asked officers to review the basis that underpinned the fees paid to ensure that fees were calculated based on a sound basis and it was clear for staff involved in delivering the election what they would be paid for duties which are additional to their job description and remuneration package.
- 1.2 This report contains the outcomes of that review and proposes a clear and transparent rationale for the elections fees paid and a fees schedule for the forthcoming year. It does not affect the level of fees paid which remain at the level set by Council last year and therefore can be met from existing budgets.

Proposals

- 1.3 Election fees at Cherwell, as at most councils, have developed over many years based on custom and practice. In the past while some jobs such as Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer, Presiding Officers and Poll

Clerks have been based on fees set by Council, other roles have been paid from a general clerical fund as determined by the Returning Officer. With the increased use of external staff to run elections this method is no longer sustainable as it is necessary to advertise pay rates at the recruitment stage.

1.4 The policy (as set out at Appendix 1) is based on the following key principles:

- Payments in addition to normal pay will only be given for increased responsibility or for specific additional functions outside of staff members' Cherwell District Council job descriptions.
- For Cherwell District staff employed by the Returning Officer on Election day and for daytime counts, staff can claim a business absence and will receive their normal council pay. In addition the Returning Officer will pay the standard election fee for the role they undertake.
- Cherwell District Council staff may not accrue flex/time off in lieu for election work from the publication of the notice of election if being paid a Returning Officer payment.
- Services (e.g. Human Resources, Customer Services and IT) will be purchased from the council by the Returning Officer. Council service heads may pay honorarium to staff in agreement with CEX for additional work and they will invoice the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer will not pay a fee to these individuals.
- Cherwell District Council staff have historically been used for processing and postal vote opening and paid additional amounts. In future, where possible, Cherwell District Council staff volunteers and staff bank will be employed and paid at an agreed hourly rate set by the Returning Officer. Cherwell District Council staff volunteers must agree with line managers and clock out of wintime. This will provide services at the same cost to the Returning Officer but increase staff resources to the council.
- Clerical fees or Returning Officer ex-gratia payments should not be paid
- The core elections team will be required to sign an opt out of European working hours directive.
- The Remuneration Formula for all Returning Officer payments shall be :
Responsibility Fee + Election Day Role Fee + Count Role Fee + Clerical Overtime + Expenses + (Superannuation RO only) + Postal votes Fees = Total Fee

Appendix 2 sets out the schedule of fees and charges based on the policy at Appendix 1.

Conclusion

1.5 These proposals are based on a careful consideration of election fees and charges. They will provide a sound basis for the payment of fees and a clear and consistent policy for the future that is fair and equitable.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

- Option One** To agree the recommendation as set out in the report
- Option Two** To amend the recommendation as set out in the report.

Implications

- Financial:** The attached appendices provide a clear and transparent policy and schedule of fees for election payments. Fees for district and parish elections can be, met from within existing budgets. For national and county council elections, funding is provided through external grant and fees are set by the relevant funding body. The proposals maintain election fees for 2011/12 at the 2010/11 levels.
- Comments checked by Eric Meadows, Accountant
01295 221552
- Legal:** It is good practice for council to review election fees and charges. The policy and schedule set out in this report provide a clear framework for election payments and are in line with legislation.
- Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services 01295 221686
- Risk Management:** A clear election fees policy is in the best interests of the council and Returning Officer.
- Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk and Insurance Manager 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Election Fees Policy
Appendix 2	Election Fees Schedule
Background Papers	
None	
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