

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 21 FEBRUARY 2007

REPORT BY HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

12. RETURNING OFFICER'S SCALE OF EXPENSES

WARDS AFFECTED: None

'D' RECOMMENDATION – that the scale of expenses, appended to the report now submitted, in relation to the holding of an election of a Councillor for the Authority or for a Parish or Town Councillor, be approved.

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To consider a report on the scale of expenses to be used by the Returning Officer in respect of the forthcoming local council elections in May 2007.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Objectives

2.1 The setting of scale of expenses for the Returning Officer in respect of the May 2007 elections will help deliver the Council's corporate objective to deliver responsible community leadership.

3.0 Background

3.1 Under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983, all expenditure incurred by a Returning Officer in relation to the holding of an election of a Councillor for the District shall:

“... insofar as it does not, in cases where there is a scale fixed for the purposes ..., exceed that scale, be paid by the Council”.

3.2 Recent significant legislative changes (eg extension of the hours of poll for local Authority elections) necessitate a review of the Council's scale of expenses for local elections.

3.3 Appended to the report now submitted is a suggested scale of

expenses to apply at the District and Town/Parish Council elections to be held in May 2007 (Appendix 'A12', pages 92 - 97). The format of expenses mirrors standard practice in local authorities throughout England and Wales.

3.4 The suggested scale of various fees has been prepared in the light of neighbouring authorities' fee structures and the statutory fees paid at recent Parliamentary elections. For example, it is understood that North Hertfordshire District Council have agreed a fee for a Presiding Officer of £200 and for a Poll Clerk of £120. Further details of fees that apply to neighbouring authorities can be obtained from the Head of Democratic Services.

4.0 Proposal

4.1 The Council's budget for 2007/08 has been prepared on the basis of the suggested fee structure.

4.2 The recruitment of staff for the forthcoming election is well underway. A scale of expenses structure other than that recommended may well lead to difficulties in recruiting staff, particularly bearing in mind the level of fees paid by neighbouring local authorities.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 No specific consultation has been undertaken in respect of this report. However, information on neighbouring authorities' scale of expenses has been obtained.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 The setting of a scale of expenses for the Council's Returning Officer assists the Authority in determining an appropriate provision to be made in its budget for the forthcoming financial year.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 As mentioned previously, the Council's budget for 2007/08 has been prepared to take account of the suggested scale of expenses for the Council elections to be held in May 2007.

8.0 Human Resource Implications

8.1 None.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

9.1 A scale of expenses will allow the Returning Officer to conduct the May 2007 elections within a defined financial framework which in turn assists the Council in its budgetary preparations for the next financial year.

10.0 Conclusion

10.1 Councillors are invited to adopt the recommendation at the head of this report.

Background Papers

None

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**DISTRICT AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS -
SCALE OF FEES – MAY 2007 ELECTIONS AND
ONWARDS (see note at end)**

SCALE OF FEES AND EXPENSES AT ELECTIONS OF DISTRICT AND TOWN/PARISH COUNCILLORS

PART 1 – DISBURSEMENTS

1. The costs actually and necessarily incurred in respect of the following, that is to say :-
 - (a) For the provision of any accommodation for the purpose of the election, including heating, lighting and cleaning and compensation for damage to any such accommodation.
 - (b) For adapting and fitting up any accommodation for the purpose of the election and restoring it for its normal use, including the provision of voting booths and any necessary furniture.
 - (c) For providing ballot boxes, including any repairs.
 - (d) For the conveyance of ballot boxes and ballot papers in those cases where the cost of transport is not included in the travelling expenses of Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks.
 - (e) For every stamping instrument required to be purchased, hired, altered or repaired.
 - (f) For copies of the Register of Electors.
 - (g) For printing and providing Ballot Papers.
 - (h) For printing and providing official Poll Cards.
 - (i) For printing and providing notices and other documents required in or about the election or poll and for publishing the same.
 - (j) For general stationery, postage, telephone calls and miscellaneous matters.
 - (k) For travelling expenses of Returning Officers, Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks, including any expenses incurred by them in conveying the ballot boxes and ballot papers to or from the polling stations. Where an Officer uses his/her own conveyance, casual user mileage up to the maximum rates per mile laid down by the Scheme of Conditions of Service and approved by the National Joint Council

for Local Authorities APT & C services shall apply as determined by the Returning Officer.

	At each District Election £	At each Town/Parish Election £
2 For the Presiding Officer at each polling station, to include all expenses, other than traveling expenses authorised by this scale	200.00	200.00
Training fee for Presiding Officers	20.00	20.00
3 Additional sum to be paid to the Presiding Officer at each polling station where the elections are for both District and Town/Parish Councillors	30.00	30.00
4 For one Poll Clerk (or additionally where electors exceed 1,000) at a polling station, to include all expenses other than travelling expenses authorised by this scale	120.00	120.00
5 Additional sum to be paid to the Poll Clerk at each polling station where the elections are for both District and Town/Parish Councillors	20.00	20.00
6 For the employment of persons in connection with the preparation and sorting etc of Poll Cards (or poll card data) for every 100 cards or fraction thereof	1.80	1.80
7 For the remuneration of persons employed in connection with the issue and receipt of Postal Ballot Papers , at each election		
Up to 50 papers issued	25.00	25.00

	For each 25, or part thereof, in excess of the first 50 papers an additional	5.00	5.00
8	For all Clerical and Other Assistance employed by the Returning Officer :		
	For each contested election, an allowance not exceeding	65.00	65.00
	In an <u>uncontested election</u> , for all necessary preliminary work including Clerical and Other Assistance an allowance not exceeding	25.00	25.00
9	For the remuneration of persons employed in connection with the Verification and/or Counting of Votes at District and Parish elections:		
		Assistant	Supervisor
	Daytime and by-election counts:		
	Up to 4 hours	64.00	100.00
	Over 4 hours (hourly rate)	16.00	25.00
	Evening Counts and/or verification:		
	Flat rate	120.00	180.00
	Verification only	70.00	100.00

PART 2 – RETURNING OFFICER’S FEES

(For services and other expenses)

Fee for conducting the election and generally performing all the duties which a Returning Officer is required to perform under any enactments relating to Local Government elections, including all disbursements and expenses other than those for which specific provision is made elsewhere in this scale and including the issue of poll cards and the remuneration of any Deputy Returning Officer, as follows:-

CONTESTED ELECTIONS

	At each District Election £	At each Town/Parish Election £
10 For each Ward in which a contested election of District Councillors is held:		
If the number of Local Government electors in the electoral area does not exceed 1000	120.00	
For each additional 1000 electors or fraction thereof beyond 1000	65.00	
11 For each Town/Parish or ward in which a contested election is held, not being combined with the election of District Councillors:		
If the number of Local Government electors in the electoral area does not exceed 1000		78.00
For each additional 1000 electors or fraction thereof beyond 1000		37.00

12	For each Parish or Ward in which contested elections of both District Councillors and Parish Councillors are held	
	If the number of Local Government electors in the electoral area does not exceed 1000	142.00
	For each additional 1000 electors or fraction thereof beyond 1000	57.00

UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS

13	Where in any Ward the election of District Councillors is uncontested, for each Ward a fee of:	35.00
14	Where in any Parish or Parish/Town Ward, the election of town/parish councilors is uncontested, for each parish or parish/town ward a fee of:	45.00

Supplementary Provisions regarding District and Parish Council Elections

For the purpose of calculating the fees under paragraph 12 hereof, the following provision shall apply:

Where in a Town/Parish or Ward election held on the same day for District Councillors and Town/Parish Councillors and one of those elections is not contested, the fee under paragraph 10 and 11 hereof shall be deemed to be inclusive and no fee shall be payable under paragraph 12 in respect of the uncontested election.

(Note: The fees are index linked to APT % C staff and national pay awards.)