



Report of: The Returning Officer

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Audit Committee	22 September 2015	All wards

SUBJECT: The scale of election fees and expenses

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report deals with the scale of fees and expenses to be adopted for future elections.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the proposed scale of fees and expenses as outlined in Appendix 1, with effect from the date of this report.
- 2.2 To agree to adopt for future years the London-wide scale of fees and expenses agreed by the Leaders Committee of London Councils' from time to time.

3 Background

- 3.1 London boroughs were first empowered to fix their own scales of election fees in 1974. It has been the practice of London Councils and its predecessor bodies to receive a report and recommend a London-wide scale of fees for adoption by individual boroughs (the "London Scale"). The London Scale is used by the London Boroughs to determine the fees for elections and other ballots which are funded from the Borough's own resources (currently the local elections, any referendum to adopt a mayoral executive model under the Local Government Act 2000 and any subsequent local mayoral election) and is also used as a guide for fees and expenses for elections funded by central government, within the Maximum Recoverable Amount set by the government for the particular election.
- 3.2 London Councils agreed to adopt the thorough revision in fees that was recommended in 1990 and to revise the fees annually thereafter. The established practice has been to revise all fees and expenses (where not stated as "actual and necessary cost") in accordance with the previous year's local government pay increases.
- 3.3 In 2002, in the light of changes to the law on postal voting, the requirement for staff to attend training sessions and a government review of fees for polling station staff, it was agreed it was necessary to

make additional revisions to some fees. A further revision was agreed for the full council elections in 2006. This took account of experiences in dealing with changes to the law on postal votes, a further government review of the fees paid for parliamentary elections, and a desire to set fees for polling station inspectors and senior count staff. An additional charge to help recognise the need for more staff to manage and supervise the issue and receipt of postal votes was agreed in 2008. No further changes to the basic structure of the fees and expenses have been proposed since.

The Proposed Scale for Future Elections in Islington

The 2015/16 scale in Appendix 1 was agreed by the Leaders' Committee of London Councils on 10 February 2015. In light of the local government pay award of 2.2% covering the 15 months up to 31st March 2016 and additional consolidated payments made to staff at SCP 5-49, it is proposed that for the 2015/16 financial year:

- Part A fees – zero increase. These are the fees for Returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers;
- Part B fees - increased by 2% for the twelve months commencing 1 April 2015. The roles undertaken in part B are generally recognised as being within the SCP 5-49 range and, therefore, should reflect the 2.2% over 15 months and consolidated payments as part of this year's Local Government pay settlement.

The scale set out in the third column of Appendix 1 is to cater for any combined local and mayoral elections where a borough has a mayoral system. The scale provides a 20% increase when a combination is required. This formula was reduced from 25% in 2010 to bring it into line with the government costing assumptions for combined polls.

It is proposed that the London scale should continue to form the basis for fees and expenses in Islington for local elections and for referendums under the Local Government Act 2000 and any mayoral election, if one were ever to be required, and as a guide for fees and expenses for other elections and referendums.

4 Implications

4.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications beyond the fees and charges themselves (appendix 1) arising from the report.

4.2 Legal Implications

Under s36 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 the council may adopt a scale of fees and charges for local elections, referendums under the Local Government Act 2000 in respect of its executive arrangements and for the election of a mayor under that Act were one to be established.

4.3 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

4.4 Resident Impact Assessment

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. There are no resident impact implications arising from this report

5 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

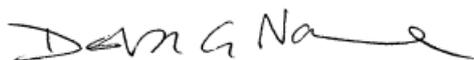
- 5.1 It is noted that formal agreement by this Council to adopt the scale of fees and expenses agreed by London Council's has not been refreshed for some years and this report gives this Committee that opportunity. It is recommended that members agree to continue to use of the London Scale of fees and expenses at elections and for referendums as described in this report and adopt the existing scale in Appendix 1 with immediate effect.

Appendices: None

Background papers: None

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



14 September 2015

Assistant Director Governance and HR

Date

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