

Title: Warwick District Council Scale of Fees

Lead Officer: Graham Leach, Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer (01926 456114)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Davison

Wards of the District directly affected: None

<b>Approvals required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	19/2/24	Cllr Davison
<b>Finance</b>		
<b>Legal Services</b>		
<b>Chief Executive</b>	19/2/24	Chris Elliott
<b>Director of Climate Change</b>		N/A
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>	19/2/24	Graham Leach
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>	19/2/24	Andrew Rollins
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	19/2/24	Graham Leach
<b>Leadership Co-ordination Group</b>	19/2/24	
<b>Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?</b>	Yes	
<b>Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?</b>	No	
<b>Accessibility Checked?</b>	Yes	

---

## Summary

The report seeks agreement for the increase in elections fees payable to staff for elections in 2024.

## Recommendation(s)

- (1) The Scale of Fees of Elections be increased by 5.44% in 2024, as the percentage at scale point 28, rounded to the nearest 50p remain in place up to December 2024.
  - (2) That the pay increase is back dated to 1 January 2024.
  - (3) The Committee notes that a full review of the Warwick District Election Fees will be undertaken and brought back to Committee for consideration before December 2024.
- 

## 1 Background/Information

- 1.1 The Council is required to establish the fees payable to persons employed by the Returning Officer at its elections, held every four years, and at any by-election held in between. The authority for approving these fees had been delegated by Council to the Audit & Standards Committee.
- 1.2 In February 2021 the Licensing & Regulatory Committee approved the Warwick District Council and Parish/Town Council Election Scale of fees, up to December 2024, subject to the inclusion of any increase as a result of a national pay award for Council employees from 1 April 2021 up to and including 1 April 2024, rounded to the nearest 50p.
- 1.3 This was agreed in anticipation that employees would receive a percentage pay award each year. However, the pay award agreed (in October 22) for April 2022 was for a flat £1,925 per scale point. As this was not a straight percentage increase, consideration needed to be given as to how best to apply this to the fees payable to persons employed by the Returning Officer. A report was brought to this Committee, and approved, for a 6.6% increase, based on the relationship of election roles to the scale points and the additional responsibility for polling staff, as follows:  
*“The Scale of Fees of Elections be increased by 6.6% in 2023 and any increase as a result of a national pay award for Council workers from 1 April 2021 up to and including 1 April 2024, rounded to the nearest 50p remain in place up to December 2024”*
- 1.4 The national pay award for Council Workers in 2023 was again settled at a flat figure of £1,925 per scale point leading to a similar challenge.
- 1.5 Officers are mindful of further phases of the Election Act coming into force during 2024 and the impact this will have on a polling station staff and that recruitment to work in polling stations is facing an increasing challenge nationally and locally.
- 1.6 With these points in mind, officers undertook analysis of the fees for elections and how they aligned to scale points for officers. In mapping these fees against scale points would have meant an average increase by circa 5.63%, the most common increase for a role would be a Grade E2 which is an increase between 5.85% to 5.44%.

- 1.7 However as there is due to be a full review of election fees before December 2024 it was thought appropriate that the lowest level was appropriate.
- 1.8 It should be noted that for the PCC election in May 2024 officers are working on setting standard fees across Warwickshire in agreement with the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO). However, WDC should also review its fees to allow for by elections (outside of scheduled election) and the general election.

## **2 Alternative Options**

- 2.1 Officers are aware that different approaches have been taken across Warwickshire, where some authorities have provided 4% uplift and others have provided that plus an additional burden payment, recognising the challenges of voter ID.

## **3 Consultation and Councillor comments**

- 3.1 The proposal has been considered and by the Leadership Co-ordination Group, via email and no comments were raised.

## **4 Implications of the proposal**

### **4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications**

- 4.1.1 The proposals within the report are within the legislative framework and associated guidance.

### **4.2 Financial**

- 4.2.1 The proposed 5.44% would see an increase cost of an estimated £12,000. This estimate was based on staffing levels for the WDC election in 2023.

### **4.3 Corporate Strategy**

- 4.3.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Corporate Strategy which sets three strategic aims for the organisation none of which are not directly implicated by the proposals in this report.

### **4.4 Environmental/Climate Change Implications**

- 4.4.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this proposal.

### **4.5 Analysis of the effects on Equality**

- 4.5.1 There are no direct impacts on equality matters arising from the recommendations of this report.

### **4.6 Data Protection**

- 4.6.1 There are no specific data protection issues within the report.

### **4.7 Health and Wellbeing**

- 4.7.1 There are no Health and Wellbeing implications arising from this proposal.

## **5 Risk Assessment**

- 5.1 There are no significant risks associated with the report though failure to address the fees levels may affect recruitment for the forthcoming election(s).

**Background papers:** none

### **Supporting documents:**

Report and Minutes of Licensing & Regulatory Committee 11 February 2021

Report and Minutes of Audit & Standards Committee 18 January 2023