

Title: Warwick District Council and Parish Election Scale of Fees  
Lead Officer: Graham Leach, Democratic Services Manager & Deputy  
Monitoring Officer (01926 456114)  
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Day  
Wards of the District directly affected: None

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### **Summary**

The report seeks agreement for the increase in elections fees payable to staff for the 2023 District & Parish Elections.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- (1) 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; and
  - (2) A full review of the Warwick District Election Fees be undertaken and brought back to Committee for consideration before December 2024.
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## **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.
- 1.4 It is recognised that there will also be additional demands on polling staff through the introduction of the requirement for voter ID in polling stations. It is reported by the Electoral Commission there is a shortage of individuals who wish to help on elections, and it is an increased challenge at each election to recruit staff of sufficient skills to undertake rolls in delivering elections.
- 1.5 There is the additional pressure that the election Count will need to be completed on Friday 5 May 2023, due to the Coronation on the morning of 6 May and the bank holiday the following Monday. To that end, officers will be seeking to have many more staff working at the Count than usual.

- 1.6 Officers were also mindful of the increase of 6.6% for Members' Allowances and the pressures on cost of living at this time.
- 1.7 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 6.21%, the most common increase for a role would be a grade E2 which is an increase between 5.75% to 6.21%.
- 1.8 For these combined reasons it was considered that a 6.6% rise in fees for this was considered appropriate. This is anticipated to be followed by a normal % increase in April 2023 and April 2024.
- 1.9 The Committee should be aware that this proposal should be back dated to any elections that have taken place between April 2022 and December 2022, however, no elections have occurred in that time.

## **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 additional burden payment, recognising the challenges of voter ID.

## **3 Consultation and Councillor comments**

- 3.1 The proposal has been considered and is supported by the Leadership Co-ordination Group.

## **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 6.6% would see an increase cost of an estimated £9,000. This estimate was based on staffing levels for the PCC election in 2021 (where additional staff were used due to covid precautions). However, at this time the overall level of staffing is not known (for example, how many counters can be recruited). Councillors should be mindful that the increase in cost will be shared with any Parish/Town Council which has an election for the specific area at the same time.

### **4.3 Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 In respect of the Council Plan, the proposal is to provide appropriate fees to employees at the election and encourage those with appropriate skills to help in the delivery of this key democratic process. This would have a small impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, but it is considered acceptable in recognising the delivery of the core democratic process.

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

- 4.4.1 There are no direct environmental implications of the proposal.

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

- 4.5.1 There are no direct impacts on equality matters from the recommendations.

### **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 from the proposals.

### **5 Risk Assessment**

5.1 There are no significant risks associated with the report.

**Background papers:** none

**Supporting documents:** Report and Minutes of Licensing & Regulatory Committee  
11 February 2021

### Report Information Sheet

Please complete and submit to Democratic Services with draft report

<b>Committee/Date</b>	18 January 2023	
<b>Title of report</b>	Elections Fees	
<b>Consultations undertaken</b>		
<b>Consultee *required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Details of consultation /comments received</b>
<b>Ward Member(s)</b>		
<b>Portfolio Holder WDC</b>	4/1/23	Day
<b>Financial Services *</b>	4/1/23	Lorraine Henson
<b>Legal Services</b>		
<b>Other Services</b>	4/1/23	Chris Elliott Returning Officer
<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>	4/1/23	Andrew Jones
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>		
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>	4/1/23	Andrew Rollins
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	4/1/23	Andrew Jones
<b>Leadership Co-ordination Group (WDC)</b>		
<b>Other organisations</b>		
<b>Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Ctte/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