

RETURNING OFFICER'S FEES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ELECTIONS

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the Returning Officer's scale of fees and associated expenses from 2019, as shown in the appendix. The Returning Officer fee and election expenses were last agreed by Council on 24 February 2015.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires each Council to appoint an officer of the authority as Returning Officer to undertake various statutory duties in relation to election procedures. In addition, the Council must provide the Returning Officer with the necessary resources to enable efficient and lawful delivery of the elections.
- 2.2 The Returning Officer for Rochford District Council is the Strategic Director.

3 Returning Officer Fees and Expenses

- 3.1 The Returning Officer is held personally responsible for the organisation and conduct of every election held within the District. For national elections and referendums the fee paid to the Returning Officer is set by statute and paid by central Government. For local elections the fee is paid by the local authority.
- 3.2 The Returning Officer fee for district and parish elections is calculated using the formula shown at Appendix 1, table A. These rates were set in September 2009. It is not proposed that there should be any increase in these rates.
- 3.3 A fee is also paid to staff in the election office in recognition of the additional responsibilities associated with serving as Deputy Returning Officers with either full or limited powers. This payment is at the discretion of the Returning Officer and is drawn from the clerical allowance which is calculated as shown at Appendix 1, table B. These rates were set in September 2009 and it is not proposed that there be any increase.
- 3.4 It is necessary to increase some of the fees payable to staff working in polling stations and on other electoral duties in order to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Wage. These increased fees have also been benchmarked with neighbouring authorities to ensure parity and preserve the Council's ability to attract staff to work additional hours in the run up to and on the day of the local election. Appendix 1, table C lists the scale of fees proposed to be implemented. This list needs to be reviewed annually in order to ensure that the rates paid remain competitive and legally compliant.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Delivery of a democratically sound and effective election is the overriding objective of the Returning Officer and the Council's Elections Team. Achievement of that objective is heavily dependent on the work undertaken by numerous temporary staff recruited to assist in various activities in the run up to and during election day. Failing to offer appropriate remuneration to those temporary staff could result in fewer people wanting to work and so jeopardise the ability of the Council to deliver the election. Failing to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Wage would, of course, put the Council in breach of a statutory obligation.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As set out in paragraph 4.1 above, it is essential that the Council can recruit and retain sufficient temporary staff to undertake the various statutory duties at election times.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory obligation under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to provide the necessary resources to the Returning Officer to carry out her duties and deliver an efficient and lawful election.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups, as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) That it be agreed to retain the fees paid to the Returning Officer at their current level and as identified at Appendix 1, table A.
- (2) That it be agreed to retain the fees for Clerical Allowance at their current level and as identified at Appendix 1, table B.
- (3) That the increased Election Fees be agreed, as set out in Appendix 1, table C for 2019.



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Background Papers:-

None.

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

Rochford District Council - Election Fees and Charges 2019**A. Returning Officer's Fees**

For each contested District / Parish / Town council ward	£123.05
Plus for each 1000 electors or part thereof	£42.52
For each uncontested District / Parish / Town Council ward	£58.45

B. Clerical Allowance T

The count per 500 electors	£15.77
Poll cards 1st 2000 electors per ward	£24.75
Each 250 part thereof	£1.61
Preparation, each 100 or part thereof	£2.76
Postal vote issue per ward 1st 50	£43.36
Each additional 50 per ward	£27.56
Postal vote opening per ward	£43.56
Each additional 50 per ward	£27.56

C. Election fees

	Agreed 2015/16	Proposed 2019
Presiding Officer	*£195.00	*£210.00
**Training	£30.00	£34.00
Travel	£15.00	£16.00
Poll Clerk	*£115.00	*£135.00
**Training	£15.00	£30.00
Travel	£7.50	£8.00
Polling Station inspector	£195.00	£210.00
Postal vote issue – hourly rate	£8.00	£9.00
Postal vote opening – hourly rate	£9.00	£10.00
Postal vote supervisor – hourly rate	£10.00	£11.00
Poll card delivery – per card	£0.15p	£0.17p
Count staff – hourly rate (day)	£10.00	
Count staff – hourly rate (night)	£12.00	£14.00
Count supervisors – hourly rate (day)	£15.00	
Count supervisors – hourly rate (night)	£16.00	£18.00
Count supervisor training	£20.00	
Trainer fee – per session	£75.00	
Room hire daily rate	£125.00	

*A 20% uplift is paid to polling staff working in combined stations.

** Training for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks is held together as recommended by the Electoral Commission.