



REGULATORY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

31 January 2024

REPORT TITLE:	BOROUGH ELECTION FEES AND CHARGES
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW & CORPORATE SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report details the proposed fees to be paid to the Returning Officer and his staff employed to undertake duties at the elections held within the Borough.

The next scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and The Combined Authority Mayoral elections (CAM) will take place on Thursday 02 May 2024.

The election fees for 2024 are set out in Appendix 1.

Fees and charges have been considered and endorsed by the Returning Officer.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Regulatory and General Purposes Committee are invited to comment on the report and to endorse the decision of the Returning Officer pertaining to the fees as outlined in Appendix 1.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

1.1 It is considered good practice to present election fees to this committee.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 Consideration has been given to a range of fees which could be paid to the Returning Officer (RO) and his staff. To prevent disparity between the fees paid by Local Authorities, The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has worked closely with the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Elections Funding Working Group (EFWG) to develop a pay structure for all staff working on polls funded from the Consolidated Fund. The recommendation put forward has been informed by both national guidance, the EFWG, and information gathered from other Merseyside Local Authorities.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The cost of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Election is met from a Central Government funding grant and the Government will provide a Fees & Charges order that will detail fees to be paid. The cost of the Combined Authority Mayoral (CAM) Elections are met from the funding provided by the Combined Authority, provisional agreement has been provided by the Combined Authority that the fees to be paid will be in line with the PCC Fees & Charges Order.

Each of the 41 police areas in England (excluding London) and Wales has a Police Area Returning Officer (PARO). The Secretary of State is responsible for designating a PARO for each police area, who must be an (Acting) Returning Officer for a UK Parliamentary constituency falling wholly or partly within the police area. The PARO is by law responsible for:

- publishing the notice of election
- the conduct of the nomination process
- ensuring that the requirements as to the content of candidate election addresses, and the procedures for submitting them, are complied with, and.

- The calculation of votes given for each candidate and the declaration of the result
- the overall conduct of the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner for their police area and for liaising with and co-ordinating the work of Local Returning Officers in the police area.

3.2 A Local Returning Officer is appointed for each voting area, for example each local authority area within the police area. The appointment of Local Returning Officers for the PCC elections flows automatically from appointment as the Returning Officer for local government elections in that local authority area.

3.3 At a Combined Authority Mayoral Election, the person appointed as Returning Officer for principal area elections will be the Local Returning Officer for the Combined Authority Mayoral Election.

The combined authority must also appoint one of its officers, or one of the officers of a constituent council, to be the Combined Authority Returning Officer (CARO) for the election. The CARO is responsible for the overall conduct of the combined authority mayoral election, and for liaising with and co-ordinating the work of ROs within the combined authority. The CARO will also have specific responsibilities for the election, including administering the nomination process and calculating and declaring the result.

3.4 The Local Returning Officer is the employer of the staff engaged specifically to run elections.

3.5 Appendix 1 sets out the proposed scale of fees for the Local Returning Officer (LRO) and his staff employed in relation to running the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Combined Authority Mayoral elections.

3.6 The fees have been determined by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) who have devised a set of pay bands that apply to all polls across Great Britain paid for by the consolidated fund. These pay bands have been calculated based on data provided by the Elections Funding Working Group (EFWG) and in turn uplifted and updated to reflect additional responsibilities introduced by the Elections Act 2022 as well as changes to average public sector pay and national minimum wage since then.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The fees and charges payable are set out in Appendix 1 of this report. Fees and charges will be met from the funding allocation grants.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Such implications are set out in this report
The role of the Local Returning Officer is prescribed by legislation.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 Such implications are set out in this report. The Local Returning Officer has a statutory obligation to provide for such resources as considered necessary to run effective elections.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 In order for elections to be administered, election staff must be paid for work undertaken. Furthermore, it is imperative that election staff are engaged in election training for which a training fee is paid.

7.2 Failure to agree a fees and charges structure could undermine the effective administration of elections and result in the Local Returning Officer not being able to appoint the staff required to run elections which will expose the Council and Local Returning Officer to considerable risk and liability.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the five Merseyside election authorities have been consulted and election fees have been compared. The Local Returning Officer has considered and agreed the fees and charges.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct equality implications relating to this report. The temporary election roles are open to all people who have relevant experience.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no known environment or climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Residents from the Wirral and Combined Authority area are employed in temporary roles. Elections create local employment opportunities. Local venues are hired for use as polling places. Not only does this create a source of income for local businesses but it also generates interest and inclusion in local business events that may not have existed if the footfall into venues had not been created.

REPORT AUTHOR: Kris Cureton
Civic and Electoral Services Manager
0151 691 8507
kriscureton@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1- scale of fees for the Local Returning Officer and his staff employed in relation to running elections.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Representation of the People Act 1983

MRA Allocations for the Police Area and Local Returning Officers at the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections on 6 May 2021 (including subsequent by-elections)

Retail Price Index- Office for National Statistics

Regulation 3(2) of the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections (Functions of Returning Officers) Regulations 2012.

3 Regulation 4(1) of the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections (Functions of Returning Officers) Regulations 2012.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Regulatory and General Purposes Committee	20 March 2019
Regulatory and General Purposes Committee	22 March 2021
Regulatory and General Purposes Committee	23 March 2022