

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

meeting date: 24 JANUARY 2023
title: RETURNING OFFICERS' SCALE OF FEES 2023/24 – BOROUGH AND PARISH ELECTIONS
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To agree the adoption of the Returning Officers' Scale of Fees in connection with the Borough and Parish Council Elections taking place on 4 May 2023 and any other local elections or referenda that might arise in 2023/24.

2 BACKGROUND

- 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. The Returning Officer for Ribble Valley Borough Council is the Chief Executive.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The Returning Officer is held personally responsible for the organisation and conduct of every election held within the Borough and in the case of the General Election the Ribble Valley Parliamentary Constituency which extends into the neighbouring Borough of South Ribble. We await the outcome of the latest Parliamentary Review but the latest proposals included parts of Ribble Valley, South Ribble and Preston Council areas in the new Ribble Valley Constituency.
- 3.2 For National Elections and Referenda the fee paid to the Returning Officer and the cost of the election itself is set by the Government and regulated by the relevant Returning Officers' Fees and Charges Order.
- 3.3 For Local Elections the Council will set scale fees which the Returning Officer should not exceed.
- 3.4 In order to approach setting these scale fees in a broadly consistent manner within Lancashire, a working group of Election Officers developed a scale of fees to be used. This took place in 2007 and those fees have since been updated annually in line with inflation and more recently the general staff pay award.
- 3.5 It is clearly good practice for these fees to be approved by the Council to which they will apply.
- 3.6 For Parish Council Elections we agreed many years ago not to recharge the cost of administering these elections to Parishes but for the Borough Council to bear the cost. The cost of running Parish Elections has increased significantly over the years, particularly when held on their own ie. Parish By Election. This may be something the Council wish to review.

RETURNING OFFICERS SCALE OF FEES 2023/24

The recommended Scale of Fees for 2023/24 are set out below:-

Returning Officer

For Borough Elections the fee to be as follows:-

	£
Per contested ward	224.80
Per uncontested ward	112.40

For Parish Elections the fee to be as follows:-

	£
Per contested ward	112.40
Per uncontested ward	56.20

Deputy Returning Officer

Deputy Returning Officer with full powers – 75% of the Returning Officers' fee

Presiding Officers

	£
Borough Elections	240.00
Parish Elections	240.00
Combined [20% uplift]	288.00

Poll Clerks

	£
Borough Elections	145.00
Parish Elections	145.00
Combined [20% uplift]	174.00

Training Sessions

Where these are held for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks working on Borough and Parish Elections £25 per session.

Issuing and Opening of Postal Votes

An overall allowance of £96.20 per 100 votes or part thereof per ward for both Borough and Parish Elections to be deployed as felt appropriate by the Returning Officer.

Count and General Clerical Fees

An overall allowance for the Count and General Clerical Duties of £129.15 per ward per 1,000 electors or part thereof for both Borough and Parish Elections.

Where an election is uncontested the fee will be £45.15 per ward.

The Count and General Clerical fee to be deployed as felt appropriate by the Returning Officer.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Financial Implications

The Council's overall budget for the Borough and Parish Council elections on 4 May 2023 is £180,000. This does not include the additional costs arising from the introduction of Voter ID for which the Council will receive new Burdens Funding. The actual cost of the Elections will ultimately depend on the number of contested seats.

4.2 Technical, Environment and Legal

The Elections will be conducted in accordance with Election Law and appropriate procedures and guidance.

4.3 Reputation

The efficient and effective administration of elections is vital to ensure the public has confidence in the Electoral process.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Agree the Returning Officers' Scale of Fees for 2023/24 Borough and Parish Elections as set out in Section 4 of this report.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE