



AGENDA

ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 27 March 2024, at 10.00 am Ask for: **Joel Cook**
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Telephone: **03000 41692**
Hall, Maidstone

Membership (11)

Conservative (8): Mr A Kennedy (Vice-Chairman), Mr N Baker, Mrs P T Cole,
Mr D Jeffrey, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr R C Love, OBE,
Mrs S Prendergast and Mr R J Thomas

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr A J Hook

Labour (1) Dr L Sullivan

Green and
Independent (1) Mr M Baldock

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Election of Chair
- 2 Substitutes
- 3 Declarations of Interest on any items on this agenda
- 4 Minutes - 28 March 2023 (Pages 1 - 2)
- 5 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses (Pages 3 - 16)
- 6 Electoral Changes Orders - Ashford (Pages 17 - 22)

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Tuesday, 19 March 2024

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 28 March 2023.

PRESENT: Mr G Cooke (Chairman), Mr A Kennedy (Vice-Chairman), Mr M Baldock, Mrs P T Cole, Mr R J Thomas, Ms S Hamilton (Substitute), Mr P Cole (Substitute) and Mr J Meade (Substitute)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr B Watts (General Counsel) and Ms L Adam (Operational Delivery Manager) and Joel Cook (Democratic Services Manager)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**7. Declarations of Interest on any items on this agenda**
(Item 2)

Mr Jordan Meade declared that in his professional paid capacity as a Senior Parliamentary Advisor to The Rt Hon. The Lord Udny-Lister PC Kt, that he provided support to Lord Udny-Lister in the passage of the Local Government (Disqualification) Act 2022 as it passed through the various Bill Stages in the House of Lords.

8. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2022
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2022 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

9. Scale of Fees
(Item 4)

Ms Lizzy Adam (Operational Delivery Manager) and Mr Benjamin Watts (General Counsel and County Returning Officer) were present for this item.

1. Ms Adam provided an introduction to the report, setting out the proposed increases to the scale of fees as detailed in the report; namely a 6.44% uplift based on the average uplift from the 2023/24 NJC pay award offer. It was also proposed that presiding officers and polling station inspectors receive an uplift of 10% in recognition the additional responsibilities anticipated as part of the introduction of voter ID arrangements. Ms Adam also outlined the final proposed change to fees in relation to Polling Station Inspectors when working on joint elections rather than single elections. This was to recognise the additional work involved when different elections were being held at the same time.
2. Responding to questions from Members, Ms Adam and Mr Watts clarified the following points:

- Presiding Officer fee uplifts were proposed because they held personal responsibility for the conduct of the election activity in their polling station. This additional responsibility meant they may have to take difficult decisions that could prevent individuals from voting, making the function more challenging.
- The repeated review of the scale of fees was necessary because of changing financial circumstances, including inflationary pressures. Mr Watts reassured the Committee that reviewing the fees on annual basis was appropriate and provided the most up to date and well informed decision-making around the issue.
- Presiding Officer travelling expenses were different from other staff expenses because of specific responsibilities, including having to securely transport election equipment between Council offices and polling stations.
- Mr Watts advised that as County Returning Officer, he and his team worked with Districts through a positive partnership approach to managing the election. Directives or instructions on specific arrangements were only given to Districts on rare occasions.
- Ms Adam advised the Committee that no concerns had been reported to the Returning Officer's team about staffing the elections. It was explained that some promotional activity was undertaken within KCC to encourage staff to work on the elections in some capacity.

RESOLVED that the proposed County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2023/24 be approved.

From: Ben Watts, County Returning Officer
To: Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 27 March 2024
Subject: 2024/25 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses
Status: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- a) At its meeting on 8 March 2010, this Committee agreed that it would annually authorise and approve the County Scale of Fees and Expenses for Kent County Council elections (KCC Scale of Fees). This is consistent with the powers delegated to the Committee by County Council and recorded in the Appendix of the Constitution.
- b) In January 2022, KCC received a request from the Kent Association of Electoral Registration Officers and Staff (Kent AEROS) for the KCC Scale of Fees to be merged with the Kent AEROS Scale of Fees for District/Borough and Parish Council elections and Neighbourhood Referendum (Kent AEROS Scale of Fees). KCC responded to say this would be something that it would be happy to explore ahead of the 2025 KCC election but it was currently prioritising the review and settlement of the KCC 2021 election claims.
- c) In the intervening period, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has introduced a pay banding system for election staff at UK Parliamentary elections, Police and Crime Commissioner elections and national referenda. These are elections funded by the UK Government and claims relating to them are administered through the DLUHC's Elections Claims Unit.
- d) The Kent AEROS notified KCC in July 2023 that it was looking to update and align the Kent AEROS Scale of Fees with the new DLUHC banding to create consistency of election staff payments across the different type of elections. Following further conversations with the Kent AEROs, KCC has been asked to consider aligning its election staff costs with the new DLUHC banding rather than merging the KCC Scale of Fees with Kent AEROS Scale of Fees.
- e) A review of the KCC Scale of Fees has been undertaken and a draft proposal for 2024/25 Scale of Fees is set out in Appendix 1 using the new DLUHC banding for election staff costs. DLUHC will update the pay bands on an annual basis to reflect changes to national minimum wage and average public sector pay. All other costs listed are proposed to be reimbursed as actual costs or by a percentage increase relating to the Deputy Returning Officer costs. Historically, the KCC Scale of Fees has been uplifted annually using the average NJC pay award for local government. However, in 2021/22, 2022/23 & 2023/24 KCC Scale of Fees were uplifted using different methods due to an absence of an NJC pay award ahead of the Committee meeting to agree the KCC Scale of Fees. It is proposed that for the 2024/25 scale

of fees, the Deputy Returning Officer costs will be updated by the percentage increase awarded to KCC staff who receive a Total Contribution Pay rating of successful. This is expected to be 2.6%.

- f) The proposed 2024/25 KCC Scale of Fees also includes a delegation to enable additional expenses up to £1000 per single item, not covered by the Scale of Fees, to be approved by the County Returning Officer under delegation from the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee and reported back to the Committee at the appropriate time. A similar delegation to the County Returning Officer and Deputy County Returning Officer was granted by the Committee for the 2021/22 Scale of Fees as it was recognised that there may be costs related to COVID-19 and other matters and it would not be practical to call an additional meeting of the Committee to make any further adjustments.

2. 2021 Election Costs

- a) The Deputy Returning Officers in the 12 borough/city/district councils are able to claim back from KCC the costs of running the KCC election in their area in line with the KCC Scale of Fees.
- b) All 12 claims have now been reviewed and settled. The total amount claimed for the 2021 KCC Election was £1,475,992.28.
- c) In recognition of the additional costs associated with making the 2021 elections COVID-19 secure, additional funding via a Section 31 Grant was paid directly from the Government to the districts as they administered the local polls. KCC requested that its proportion of the funding should be deducted from the districts' claim to KCC. With the deduction of KCC's proportion of Section 31 Grant (£310,987.11) from the claims, the total cost of the 2021 election to KCC was £1,165,005.17.
- d) Whilst this is lower than the total cost of the 2017 KCC election (£1,950,000), it is important to note that the 2021 KCC election was held in conjunction with another Kent-wide election, the delayed Police & Crime Commissioner election which brought significant savings in terms of staffing, polling station and postage costs.

3. 2025 Election Costs

- a) Following the 2021 KCC election, four KCC by-elections have been held. The claims for these by-elections have been reviewed and settled. The net cost to KCC to date is £151,780.87.
- b) Since 2021, increased costs have been observed particularly in relation to postage, venue hire and staffing due to inflationary pressures, increased energy prices and the cost-of-living crisis. Insufficient funds in KCC's Election Reserve, has been added as a risk to Governance, Law & Democracy's Risk Register.
- c) On this basis, we are forecasting the 2025 KCC election, which is anticipated to be a standalone election, to cost in the region of £2,000,000 - £2,200,000.

4. Recommendation

The Electoral & Boundary Review Committee is asked to approve the proposed County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2024/25.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Proposed KCC Scale of Election Fees and Expenses 2024-25

Background Documents

Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 8 March 2010

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=3230&Ver=4>

Report Author and Relevant Director

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PROPOSED COUNTY SCALE OF FEES AND EXPENSES 2024/25

		2023/24	2024/25
Stationery & Equipment Costs			
1	Printing and publishing all notices, forms and other documents, providing stationery and sundries, and other miscellaneous expenditure	Reasonable and appropriate cost	Actual Cost
2	Stationery and equipment at each polling station, including depreciation		
3	Hire of any building or room for the purpose of the election and the expenses attending the use of any building or room, including temporary polling stations if necessary		
4	Fitting-up polling stations including the provision, transport and erection of voting compartments, the hire of necessary furniture (where this is not otherwise available) and the return to store afterwards		
5	Production and printing of Ballot Papers		
6	Printing and providing copies of the Electoral Register		
7	Production and printing of official poll cards and postal vote packs		
8	Delivery of official poll cards by hand	Second class postage rate	£0.15 - £0.34 [DLUHC Other Rate]

9	Elections Management Software	N/A	50% of annual licence fee to be shared equally at a combined election
Staff Training Costs			
1	Cost of providing online training	N/A	Actual Cost
2	For each training session provided by the DRO for Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks or count staff (subject to agreement from KCC in advance)	£212.34	£100 - £150 [DLUHC Other Rate]
3	For each Presiding Officer and Poll Clerk attending training	£54.98	£40 (max) [DLUHC Other Rate]
4	For each counter attending training (subject to agreement from KCC in advance)	N/A	£40 (max) [DLUHC Other Rate]
5	For each count supervisor attending training	N/A	£40 (max) [DLUHC Other Rate]
Polling Station Staffing Costs			
1	Presiding Officer– single election	£255.97	£14.70-£16.80 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band C Rate] (see Note 3)
2	Presiding Officer– combined election or difficult station due to local circumstances (at discretion of DRO)	Shared equally with other elections, up to a maximum of £157.23	£16.81-£18.38 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band C Rate] shared equally at a

			combined election (see Note 3)
3	Presiding Officer who acts as a supervisor in a Polling Place where there are a number of polling stations (additional).	£12.42	PO taking on additional responsibilities can be paid an additional £25 on top of the PO fee [DLUHC Rate]
4	For each Poll Clerk at a Polling Station – single election	£170.30	Minimum of National Living Wage up to £13 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band A Rate] (see Note 4)
5	For each Poll Clerk at a Polling Station – combined election or difficult station due to local circumstances (at discretion of DRO)	Shared equally with other elections, up to a maximum of £92	£13.01 - £14.18 p/h [Pay Band A DLUHC Rate] shared equally at a combined election (see Note 4)
6	Polling Station Inspector	Single - £255.97 Joint - Shared equally with other elections, up to a maximum of £157.23	£15.75 - £27.30 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band D Rate] shared equally at a combined election (see Note 3)

7	Standby Polling Station Staff Fee	N/A	£50 (max) to be shared equally at a combined election
Verification and Count Staffing Costs			
1	Counting Assistant (Daytime)	N/A	Minimum of National Living Wage up to £14.18 p/h(4 hours min) [DLUHC Pay Band A Rate]
2	Counting Assistant (Overnight)	N/A	Minimum of National Living Wage up to £14.18 p/h (4 hours min) [DLUHC Pay Band A Rate]
3	Count Team Leader (Daytime)	N/A	£12.60 - £16.80 p/h (4 hours min) [DLUHC Pay Band B Rate]
4	Count Team Leader (Overnight)	N/A	£12.60 - £16.80 p/h (4 hours min) [DLUHC Pay Band B Rate]
5	Count Supervisor (Daytime)	N/A	£14.70 - £18.38 p/h (4 hours min) [DLUHC Pay Band C Rate]

6	Count Supervisor (Overnight)	N/A	£14.70 - £18.38 p/h (4 hours min) [DLUHC Pay Band C Rate]
7	Count Manager (Daytime)	N/A	£15.75 - £27.30 p/h (4 hours min) [DLUHC Pay Band D Rate]
8	Count Manger (Overnight)	N/A	£15.75 - £27.30 p/h (4 hours min) [DLUHC Pay Band D Rate]
9	IT Support	N/A	£12.60 - £16.80 p/h (4 hours min) [DLUHC Pay Band B Rate]
10	Refreshments for staff at the verification and count	Maximum £5 per head	Maximum £5 per head
Postal Vote Opening Session Costs			
1	Postal Vote Opener/Scanner Supervisor	N/A	£12.60 - £16.80 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band B Rate]
2	Postal Vote Opener/Scanner Assistant	N/A	Minimum of National Living Wage up to

			£14.18 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band A Rate]
3	Postal Vote Prep and Issue Supervisor	N/A	£12.60 - £16.80 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band B Rate]
4	Postal Vote Prep and Issue Assistant	N/A	Minimum of National Living Wage up to £14.18 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band A Rate]
5	Postal Vote Opening Session Manager	N/A	£15.75 - £27.30 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band D Rate]
6	IT Support	N/A	£12.60 - £16.80 p/h [DLUHC Pay Band B Rate]
Travelling Expenses			
1	Expenses to RO/DRO staff to plan for the poll or for the conduct of the election	£9.86	45p per mile OR £10 for up to 20 miles using public transport OR £20 over 20 miles using public transport [DLUHC Rate]
2	Presiding Officer travelling expenses	£17.49	
3	Poll Clerk travelling expenses	£9.86	
4	Counting staff travelling expenses (at the discretion of the DRO)	N/A	

Deputy Returning Officer Costs			
1	Contested single election – payment to District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff in the conduct of the election not covered by the above fees	£134.23 – each 1000 electors or part	Actual cost (hourly rate x hours) with clear description of task undertaken up to a maximum of £134.23 per 1000 electors or part [plus % increase]
2	Contested combined election – payment to District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff in the conduct of the election not covered by the above fees	£67.11 – for each 1000 electors or part	Actual cost (hourly rate x hours) with clear description of task undertaken up to a maximum of £67.11 per 1000 electors or part [plus % increase]
3	Contested single election – payment to DRO for the management and conduct of the election – for each 1000 electors or part	£56.25	£56.25 (plus % increase)
4	Contested combined election – payment to DRO for the management and conduct of the election – for each 1000 electors or part	Shared equally with other elections, up to a maximum of £38.85	Shared equally at a combined election, up to a maximum of £38.85 (plus % increase)

5	Payment to District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff (including the provision of a DRO) at an uncontested election – for each 1000 electors or part	£37.03	£37.03 (plus % uplift)
Other Costs			
1	Additional expenses (if any) involved in and about the conduct of the election including (a) professional, clerical and other assistance, (b) professional and legal advice, (c) additional costs associated with a recount of the votes and (d) other disbursements	Such amount as may be approved by the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee at the appropriate time.	Up to £1000 per single item to be approved by the County Returning Officer under delegation from the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee and be reported back to Committee at the appropriate time. Over £1000 per single item to be approved by Electoral and Boundary Review Committee at the appropriate time.

Definitions:

1. Single election means a poll for the County Council election or by-election only.
2. Combined election means a poll that is conducted at the same time as the County Council poll, which could be a District or Parish election or by-election or a national poll, such as a parliamentary election or a referendum.

Notes:

1. The fees are calculated on the number of local government electors on the register of electors and entitled to vote at the last day for publication of the notice of election.
2. KCC is only able to make payment in accordance with its Scale of Fees and Expenses. There is no provision for the following costs, so these are unable to be reimbursed:
 - registration costs including printing and postage related to absent voting
 - completion of claim form
 - DRO superannuation costs
3. Up to a maximum of 18 hours: 16 hours on polling day plus 2 additional hours for the collection of polling station equipment and attendance at a Presiding Officer briefing in advance of polling day
4. Up to a maximum of 16 hours on polling day

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From: Ben Watts, County Returning Officer
To: Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 27 March 2024
Subject: 2023 Electoral Changes Orders – Ashford
Status: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

This paper is to update the Committee about two Electoral Changes Orders made on 16 February 2023 and relate to alterations to the county division boundaries in the Ashford area.

2. The Ashford (Electoral Changes) (No. 2) Order 2023

In 2015 Ashford Borough Council conducted a Community Governance Review (CGR) of its parish ward boundaries.

In October 2016 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) notified Kent County Council (KCC) that it was carrying out a review following the CGR in Ashford. It advised, subject KCC's approval, it would need to make a related alterations order to the county division boundaries as a consequential change resulting from the CGR. The Committee considered and agreed the proposed alterations to the county electoral boundaries in November 2016.

[The Ashford \(Electoral Changes\) Order 2017](#) was made and came into force for the KCC election on 4 May 2017.

In August 2021, KCC contacted the LGBCE as it had become aware of an error in the wording of the order. [The Ashford \(Electoral Changes\) \(No. 2\) Order 2023](#) was subsequently made to correct the wording in the original order.

3. The Ashford (Electoral Changes) (No. 1) Order 2023

In addition to The Ashford (Electoral Changes) (No. 2) Order 2023, KCC became aware that a second Electoral Changes Order had been made, [The Ashford \(Electoral Changes\) \(No. 1\) Order 2023](#). This Order made changes to the county division boundaries of Ashford Central and Ashford Rural West which will come into effect for the KCC election in May 2025. The changes are detailed in Appendix 1 & 2 with an explanatory note and map.

In 2022 Ashford Borough Council conducted a further Community Governance Review (CGR) of its parish ward boundaries. As part of the CGR, the local KCC Members were consulted on the proposed change who confirmed their agreement: Paul Bartlett (Ashford Central) and Charlie Simkins (Ashford Rural West).

However, this Committee, which has responsibility for dealing with all matters relating to county division boundaries, was not consulted about this alteration.

Officers have been liaising with Ashford Borough Council and LGBCE about this. The 12 borough, city and district councils have subsequently been asked to ensure that KCC is notified of any Community Governance Reviews or proposed related orders to county division boundaries going forwards.

4. Recommendation

The Electoral & Boundary Review Committee is asked to note The Ashford (Electoral Changes) (No. 1) Order 2023 and The Ashford (Electoral Changes) (No. 2) Order 2023 which relate to county division boundaries in the Ashford area.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Explanatory Note
- Appendix 2 – Map

Background Documents

Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 24 November 2016

[Agenda for Electoral and Boundary Review Committee on Thursday, 24th November, 2016, 10.00 am \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)

[The Ashford \(Electoral Changes\) Order 2017](#)

[The Ashford \(Electoral Changes\) \(No. 1\) Order 2023](#)

[The Ashford \(Electoral Changes\) \(No. 2\) Order 2023](#)

5. Report Author and Relevant Director

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Appendix 1 - The Ashford (Electoral Changes) (No. 1) Order 2023

The hatched area shown on the accompanying map as polling district DW4X – Sandyhurst Farm will be moved from the county division of Ashford Central to the county division of Ashford Rural West. The polling district consists of two properties with two registered electors.

This is a consequential change to the county divisions following the 2022 Ashford Community Governance Review and the resulting Ashford (Electoral Changes) (No.1) Order 2023 that moved polling district DW4X – Sandyhurst Farm into Boughton Aluph Parish and Goat Lees Borough Ward.

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Polling District DW4X - Sandyhurst Farm



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